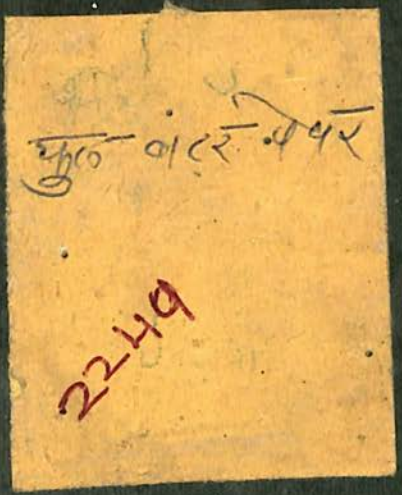

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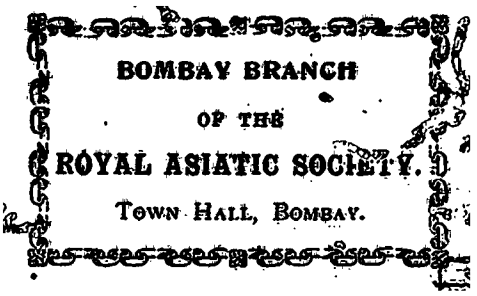

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Lord Penzance on the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy

A JUDICIAL SUMMING-UP

BY THE

RT. HON. SIR JAMES PLAISTED WILDE
BARON PENZANCE

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PREFACE.

THE suggestion that the Shakespeare Plays were in truth written by Francis Bacon was, I believe, first made in America, although a gentleman named Smith, acting on his own observations, published a similar suggestion not long afterwards in this country.[1]

The matter was not very keenly taken up or discussed here, but in the United States it has attracted much more attention.

American ideas have almost always had a great attraction for me; and when, by chance, a few years ago I met with the announcement that an American gentleman had discovered a cypher in one of the Shakespeare Plays revealing the true authorship of them, I lost no time in securing a copy of Mr. Donnelly's book as soon as it came out.

I need hardly say that I was wholly disappointed. The attempt to establish a cypher totally failed. There was not indeed the semblance of a cypher, as far as I could see, in the voluminous string of words which the author had picked out of several pages of the plays with a marvellous expenditure of patient and most ingenious labour. But I read Mr. Donnelly's first volume, which was quite in-

[1] See W. H. Smith's book, "Bacon and Shakespeare."

dependent of the supposed cypher, with great interest.

This excited me to read the controversy that had been lately carried on in the columns of "The Daily Telegraph" newspaper, and which had been republished in a book called "Shakespeare Dethroned," written, I think, by Mr. Theobald; and from that I was led into the reading of Judge Holmes' book and the "Shakespeare Myth" of Mr. Appleton Morgan.

These books, most able as they are, were to my thinking too long and elaborate to attract a very large class of readers; and it constantly occurred to me while reading them that the very striking facts and materials thus collected might be put together in a much shorter form—very much after the fashion of a judicial summing up—so as to exhibit in a more attractive light the arguments upon which the Baconions thought themselves justified in questioning so fixed and venerable a belief as that William Shakespeare wrote the plays which have so long passed by his name. As no one else seemed to have done this, or to be likely to do it, I set about it myself, without much hope of living to finish it. I have only one remark to make before submitting it to the kind reader; and it is this—that he must not expect to find in these pages an equal and impartial leaning of the judge alternately to the case of both parties, as would, I hope, be found in any judicial summing up of the evidence in a real judicial inquiry. The form of a summing up is only adopted for convenience, but it is, in truth, very little short of an argument for the

laintiffs. At the same time the facts are stated,) far as I am aware, with perfect correctness, nine-nths of them being taken from the statements of Ir. Halliwell-Phillipps and Mr. Grant White, the outest supporters of the Shakespeare case, and no ct or incident telling in favour of the defendants as been intentionally withdrawn from notice.

It will be understood, I hope, that I have made o attempt by original research to increase the tock of knowledge already in our possession re-ative to the work or character of Shakespeare. Nor have I even attempted to avail myself of the abours of others beyond what is to be found in the w books which I have already named, of which the ost prominent by far are the works of Mr. Grant White and Mr. Halliwell-Phillips. I ought to men-on in addition the biographies of Mr. Knight and Ir. Staunton. These authors are all, I think, sup-orters of the defendants' case; the two first em-hatically so. The field of argument in this con-oversy is extravagantly large. The contents of irty-six plays afford in themselves material for ndless criticism and argumentative conclusion as their authorship. But a summing up pre-sup-oses a definite area of testimony or evidence of ct, and this must be my excuse for recapitulating e works to which alone I have had recourse in llecting the facts and arguments which I have us, inadequately I fear, endeavoured to sum up.

SHAKESPEARE OR BACON?

Introductory Charge.

Gentlemen of the Jury,

The inquiry into which I am going to invite you to enter is a peculiar one. Peculiar in all its aspects and its circumstances. So large a jury has never before been impanelled, for the number of your members is limited only by your own volitions. Everyone who cares to assist at this investigation is invited to take his seat among you. And your verdict, which will be taken by that of the majority, will be asked of you only at your leisure. But the parties to this judicial proceeding are peculiar also, for the Plaintiffs are claiming that which their ancestor (from whom they derive their title) did not care to possess; and the Defendants are seeking to hold what he, whose title they represent, held to be of no value. Nay, the matter is more singular still, for Lord Bacon, whom the Plaintiffs represent, did, upon their own showing, all in his power to bring about a public belief in William Shakespeare's title; and William Shakespeare, upon the same showing, assisted Lord Bacon to stand in the dark shrouded in the cloak that he had thrown about him. Lastly,

it is somewhat novel, even in the annals of English lawsuits, that the events upon which you will be asked to decide took place about three hundred years ago.

But after that mighty lapse of time it is hardly, I think, reasonable that I should extend it, even by five minutes, without need; and as my true office is to assist you and shorten your labours, it is imprudent that I should lengthen them by needless remarks.

I go then at once to the subject.

The Plaintiffs represent those who seek to explain away the apparent discrepancy between the life, character and mental acquirements of William Shakespeare and the plays which bear his name, by propounding the question: Is it certain, after all, that he ever wrote them?

The Plaintiffs, I have said, are claiming that which their ancestor from whom they derive their title did not care to possess. Let me explain. Francis Bacon, according to the theory of the Plaintiffs as I understand it, was anxious to conceal the fact that he had been guilty of writing for the stage, which it appears was thought in those days to be a very disreputable occupation. And instead of putting forward his plays in his own name, he made use of the name of Shakespeare, who was the acting manager of the theatre at which they were produced. The same anxiety, it is contended, to protect his reputation induced him to adopt the old name when, having enlarged and improved his plays, he determined to collect and publish them again in

the Folio of 1623, with the assistance of Messrs. Heminge and Condell. You will have to judge whether this is the fair conclusion to be drawn from the facts of the case. Those among you who have studied the writings of Bacon, and are keenly alive to his marvellous mental powers, may have no difficulty in accepting it. But it has to be proved. Those again who have extended an almost affectionate regard to the young man under whose name the plays were published, and who had always accepted him as the undoubted author of them, will naturally receive the suggestion that the plays were the work of another with the greatest repugnance.

It is to be hoped that among those contented to serve on the jury there may be many (and I profess myself one) who have no such previously formed opinion on the subject, and to them this question has at least that sort of intelligent interest which belongs to all such controversial inquiries. It might have been as well, perhaps, if this question had never arisen, and the world had been content with the various ideal pictures of William Shakespeare which had been elaborated by his admirers from the plays which bore his name. But this was no longer possible when the real history of his life and education became more widely and generally known. The authorship of the plays became at once matter of controversy, and it is as well that it should be fairly and temperately discussed and considered like any other question of fact. I see no reason why this should not be done without heat or acrimony.

If, as a matter of fact, Francis Bacon wrote the

plays, they could only have been published in the name of Shakespeare with Shakespeare's consent. At no time, therefore, were there any rival claims to the authorship to be adjusted between them.

Did William Shakespeare write the plays, or did he only lend his name to the true writer? That is the main and in truth the substantial question you have to try. Whether the true writer was in fact Francis Bacon is a subordinate and subsidiary question, which arises only upon the assumption that William Shakespeare was not.

I have troubled you with these few remarks, being anxious at the outset that you should justly appreciate the true nature of the question which you are asked to determine, and I may now at once pass to the facts.

THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born and brought up at Stratford-on-Avon. He came to London when he was barely of age, and for something like twenty years lived in London, where he acted as manager and perhaps part owner of the "Globe" and "Blackfriars" theatres, in which business he realized a considerable fortune, and retired to his native town, where he died and was buried in the year 1616.

You have learned in the course of the controversy that these well-known and highly appreciated works of dramatic art called the "Shakespeare Plays" did not at the time when they were first presented to the public receive the eulogy and admiration which are now on all hands bestowed upon them. Many proofs of this have been offered to you in the course of the evidence; I will refer to a few later on.

But by the end of the seventeenth century, Betterton, the well-known actor, was so impressed by the signal beauty of the plays, that he determined to find out something about their reputed author. For Shakespeare was so little known except among his theatrical friends and acquaintances, and the wonder of the plays which bore his name so little

appreciated among the cultivated people of his day, that his life and death attracted little or no attention. So little, indeed, does he seem to have mixed or associated with the able men of the time, that, excluding five signatures, there is not a single scrap of his writing in existence; and in the letters, diaries, and memoirs of his contemporaries, no mention of or allusion to him personally has, so far as I am aware, been brought to light.

But his name in connection with dramatic works was familiar enough to the public; for during the eighteen or twenty years that he resided chiefly in London, numerous plays made their appearance bearing on the face of them the words "written by William Shakespeare." It is really not easy to say how many plays were during his life thus attributed to his pen; and after his death many more were added to the list. The plays which we know as the Shakespeare Plays at the present day, and which alone are the subject of the present controversy, form only a portion of the plays which had thus been published under his name during his life.

At the time when the plays were written, which was between 1586 and 1610, the custom was that all publications should be entered at the Stationers' Hall under the name of those who claimed a right in them. This does not seem to have been done in reference to any of the plays in question by William Shakespeare, or by others in his name or on his behalf. Nor has it been found possible to trace his hand in any dealings with them. The books of the Stationers' Company are still fortunately in exist-

ence, and I shall have presently to call your attention more minutely to the entries made in them.

The absence of all collateral proof connecting Shakespeare with any of the plays has given rise to a curious dilemma—Are *all* the plays to which the words "written by William Shakespeare" were attached, or which were publicly sold as written by him, to be accepted as really written by him? The answer must be in the negative. It is common ground between the parties in this dispute that the internal evidence to be obtained from the plays themselves forbids such a conclusion. In a list of the plays publicly attributed to him, you might find side by side with such plays as "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing," "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "King Lear," together with "Hamlet," and the great historical plays, such plays as the following: "Sir John Oldcastle," "The London Prodigal," "The Puritan Widow of Watling Street," "The Comedy of George à Greene," "Fair Em, the Miller's Daughter," "The Birth of Merlin," "Mucedorus," "The Merrie Devil of Edmonton," and "The Arraignment of Paris," all equally declared to be written by William Shakespeare. But nobody will be found to assert at the present day that the brain and hand which produced "The London Prodigal," or "The Yorkshire Tragedy," or "The Merrie Devil of Edmonton," could, short of a miracle, have produced "Macbeth" or "Hamlet."

This fact furnishes us with a conclusion which may turn out to be of remarkable importance in

solving the main question with which you have to deal. For if Shakespeare did not write all these plays, it is an inevitable fact that *there was somebody else* who did write plays under cover of Shakespeare's name. This may have been with his connivance, or it may have been the work of the printers without consent from him. But however this may be, the fact remains—Some man was the author of some of these plays whose name was *not Shakespeare*, and who wished to keep his authorship unknown. And when I come to bring the details of this matter to your notice, I think you will say that it is pretty clear that Shakespeare could not have been long ignorant of the use made of his name—and that he did nothing to discourage or put a stop to the practice.

Here is a list of some of the plays of which he passed as the author. It is taken from the statements made by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps.[1]

"Arden of Feversham."
"Arraignment of Paris."
"The Birth of Merlin."
"Pericles."
"Yorkshire Tragedy."
"Two Noble Kinsmen."
"Double Falsehood."
"Fair Em."
"Comedy of George à Greene."
"Henry I." and "Henry II."
"Locrine."
"Lorrino."
"Merry Devil of Edmonton."
"Mucedorus"

[1] "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," p. 193.

"The Puritan."
"The Second Maiden's Tragedy."
"Oldrastes."
"London Prodigal."

I will not now pursue this part of the subject; my object is only to give you a short history of the case at present; but no review of it, however short, would be complete without a reference to the indiscriminate use made of the words "written by William Shakespeare," in connection with a number of plays which, in respect of ability and beauty, are wide as the poles asunder from one another. These plays, then, which all bore the name of Shakespeare, naturally fall into two groups. One group, both in the choice of subjects and the treatment of them, bespeaks an author of the highest mental culture, familiar with the classical authors, as well as modern languages, a philosopher, a man of science, and without doubt a trained lawyer. The second group may be compendiously described (those of them which have been preserved to us) as commonplace in object and treatment, works which perhaps would hardly have been preserved at all if they had *not* played *a part in this* Shakespeare mystery.

It is impossible to contemplate the above list of works of which he was the reputed author without asking ourselves some questions. How came these plays to bear his name? Did he write all or any of them? And if not, why could they not have appeared without the name of any author?

This, then, was the state of things when William Shakespeare died, an event which occurred in the

year 1616. He gave up his connection with the theatres and retired with a considerable fortune from London about the year 1604—some say 1610—returning to his native town, where he carried on some business more or less connected with agriculture, for the six years which preceded his death. From this time forward there is no evidence, or even tradition, that he was in any way occupied with literature, or engaged in any intellectual work up to the time of his death. He left behind him a long and minute will, dealing with every little thing he possessed, but not a word about any manuscripts, plays or other writing. There is not, moreover, an allusion to any books or printed plays or literary notes to be found in it, and though he appointed executors, he gave them no directions on the subject of any writings or literary composition. There was not, therefore, at the time he died, any clue to the identification of his literary work, if he had produced any, or of the part which he had played in the production of any of these Plays at his theatre.

Now what I want you to observe is this, that this Shakespeare mystery—this question whether William Shakespeare was the author of [illegible] or which of the numerous plays which during [illegible] life had been printed and published under his name—the very question which after a lapse of three hundred years has been so seriously agitated of late, and is now before you for solution, had, in point of fact, arisen as soon as Shakespeare ceased to live, although it was not then agitated or discussed.

It was as uncertain then as it is now, which of the plays (if any) were really written by William Shakespeare, so far as any acknowledgment by him or any act done by him was concerned. An indiscriminate mass of dramatic writings bore his name—they differed so widely in character that he could not have been the author of them all, and nothing had been said or done by himself while he lived, and nothing had been left behind him when he died, which would enable the world to identify any particular play as the work of his pen.

He died, as I have said, in the year 1616. Seven years passed away, when in the year 1623 a folio volume made its appearance, *wholly devoid of any authority from him or his executors or any of his family*, in which some thirty-six plays were printed together and declared to have been written by him, and to be all that he ever wrote. These are what we know as the Shakespeare Plays.

A great question here arises—what authority had those who put forth this book to choose between the dramas which bore his name, and, rejecting some, as not written by him, assert for others of them an authorship which he had never claimed for these himself?

The only answer to this question is to be found, if at all, in the Folio itself. The circumstances attending its appearance, the way in which it was printed, the account given of its history and origin in a long preface by the two of his fellow-actors who fathered the work, and, above all, the sudden and mysterious appearance in it of some twenty

additional plays never before published, and some of them never even heard of before, will engage your serious attention when I come to lay them before you. The facts are full of interest, and in many respects of mystery; but I must not deal with them now.

It is more to the purpose now that I should remind you of the information which we have respecting the birth, education, habits and conduct of the man to whom the authorship of these imperishable works of genius has been attributed. You will then be in a position to compare the man with the works which are said to have emanated from him. Much in the present controversy, nay, almost everything, depends on this comparison. The plaintiffs (Baconians) say that it would be contrary to all experience and utterly incredible that such a man, so brought up, so defectively educated, and so destitute of the requisite means for the culture and improvement of his natural capacities, whatever they may have been, as this man was, should have produced compositions such as these plays. Indeed they go further, and say that for want of the knowledge and learning displayed in them it was practically impossible. Such is the plaintiffs' contention.

It is therefore a most fortunate matter for us that the facts, so far as they are known, respecting Shakespeare's life, are not in dispute. The accounts of his life which have been handed down by tradition, and the facts which have been sedulously collected, are pretty well common ground between the parties. They were collected and ascertained

long before anybody had suggested that William Shakespeare did not write the plays which had long passed under his name, and they were sought out almost entirely by those who have been his warmest admirers, and have been collected by those who have been, up to the present time, the most steadfast believers in Shakespeare's authorship.

SHAKESPEARE'S PERSONAL HISTORY.

A few sentences will recall all that is needful in his family history.

John Shakespeare, the father of William, was living in Stratford-on-Avon in the year 1552, where he carried on business as a glover, and dealt also in wood and corn. He seems to have been a thriving and rising man, and in 1568 he became a High Bailiff of the Borough. Stratford-on-Avon was at this time a very dirty little place, with a few hundred inhabitants. The streets were filled with mud, slops, and all sorts of foul refuse, which the inhabitants allowed to accumulate in the street before their houses.[1] The Stratford folk were also very rude and ignorant, many, even of the best of them, could not write their own names, and among those who could not was John Shakespeare. William Shakespeare's father, in the year 1557, married Mary Arden, the daughter of a yeoman farmer. She inherited some little property under her father's

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," p. 18.

will. In 1556 he was able to buy the house in which he lived, and there in April, 1564, was born to him a son—the celebrated William Shakespeare.

There was a grammar school at Stratford, and it is said that William went there for a while in his early boyhood, though there is no actual proof of it.

William Shakespeare is said to have been taken away early from this school, and when he was about fifteen or sixteen years old he was apprenticed to a butcher.

When he was a penniless youth of eighteen he married Ann Hathaway, a woman of twenty-six, daughter of a small yeoman farmer in the hamlet of Shottery, near Stratford. Her first child (a daughter, named Susannah) was born within about five months after her marriage. There is every reason to believe that a marriage did take place between them by a special licence, in respect of which a bond has been discovered in the Worcester Registry,[1] but no precise proof of the marriage has ever come to light, notwithstanding the most diligent search. In 1585, twins, named Hamnet and Judith, were born to them.

Such in substance is the account of Shakespeare's life at Stratford, given by his warmest admirer and supporter, Mr. Grant White, whose contempt for the suggestion that anybody else had so much as a hand in the production of the plays has been poured forth in language of which I will remind you later on.

I will now refer shortly to the testimony of another

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," Grant White, p. 47.

gentleman, Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, whose great industry in research has enriched the whole subject with numerous valuable details, and who is also among the first, if not the first, in estimation among those who support the authorship of the defendant. From what he says it appears that it is probable that William Shakespeare, in his early youth, witnessed representations of the religious plays generally known as Mysteries, and it may well be that he witnessed the performances of the players who, in those days, frequently visited provincial towns, and were known to have acted at Stratford. His after life goes far to establish that he had a strong theatrical taste. As to his learning, Mr. Phillipps [1] tells us that:

> "He imbibed a certain amount of Latin at school, but that his acquaintance with that language was, throughout his life, of a very limited character."

And, says Mr. Phillipps:

> "It is not probable that scholastic learning was ever congenial to his tastes, and it should be recollected that books in most parts of the country were then of very rare occurrence. Lily's grammar and a few classical works, chained to the desks of the Free School, were probably the only volumes of the kind to be found in Stratford. The copy of the Black-letter English History, so often depicted as well thumbed by Shakespeare in his father's parlour, never existed out of the imagination. Fortunately for us, the youthful Dramatist had, excepting in the schoolroom, little opportunity of studying any but a grander volume, the infinite Book of Nature.

* * * * *

1 "Outlines, p. 41.

"His defective classical education was really owing to his being removed from school long before the usual age. Some time afterwards, most likely in 1579, when he was in his sixteenth year, he was apprenticed by his father to a butcher. . . . But the great Dramatist was no ordinary executioner; according to Aubrey, 'When he killed a calf he would do it in a high style and make a speech.'"[1]

These are all the actual facts known with certainty about him up to the time that he ran away from Stratford to London. But there are some traditions well supported which enable us to get a further insight into his character and to estimate the sort of life which he led up to that time.

It appears that in the neighbouring village of Bidford there was a delectable crew of young men calling themselves the Bidford topers. On one occasion they challenged Stratford to a trial of strength in beer drinking. The challenge was accepted, and among the Stratford champions was William Shakespeare. Bidford was victorious, and the Stratford men, attempting to walk home, found their legs give way under them, and they spent the night on the roadside under a large crabtree, which to this day is called Shakespeare's crab.

There are no traditional accounts of any similar excesses in his after life, nor indeed are there any traces of any propensities of that kind.

The following account of him is also traditional, but it is vouched by respectable authority.

The Rev. W. Fulmer, an antiquary, who died in 1688, bequeathed his manuscripts and biographical

[1] "Outlines," p. 43.

memoranda to the Rev. R. Davies, who died in 1708. To a note of Fulmer's which barely records Shakespeare's birth, death and occupation, Davies made some short additions, the principal of which is in these words: "He was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him often whipped and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement."

The same story is told by Rowe, on the authority of Betterton, who went down to Stratford on purpose to obtain materials for writing his life. Rowe says: "He had by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and amongst them some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, and in revenge he made a ballad upon him which he fixed to the gate-posts of Charlecote Park."

The following is the best account of this ballad, or at least the opening verse, which has come down to us:

"A parliament man, and a Justice of Peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass;
If lousie is Lucy as some volkes miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousie whatever befall it.
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass is his state,
We allow by his ears with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lousie as some volkes miscall it,
Sing lousie Lucy whatever befall it."

It is pretty well agreed that it was the prosecution instituted by Sir Thomas Lucy under this insult which caused Shakespeare to betake himself to London.

We can easily conceive his condition. His father was much reduced in circumstances, his own family was increasing. His house was dirty, miserable and bookless; his companions degraded, and his pursuits low; he had been whipped and imprisoned, and he fled probably penniless to London.

Says Halliwell-Phillipps:

> "Removed prematurely from school, residing with illiterate relatives, and in a bookless neighbourhood, thrown into the midst of surroundings adverse to scholastic progress, it is difficult to believe that when he left Stratford he was not *all but destitute* of polished accomplishments."[1]

The common people in those days were densely ignorant: they picked up their mother-tongue as best they could. The first English Grammar was not published until 1586, after Shakespeare's education, if such it may be called, was over. It is evident that much learning was impossible, for the necessary books did not exist. The horn book for teaching the alphabet would almost exhaust the resources of any common day school that might exist in the towns and villages. Little, if any, English was taught even in the lower classes of the grammar schools. Such is the statement of Goadby.

From the same authorities we learn that:

[1] "Outlines," p. 63.

"The common people in England in the sixteenth century were fierce, jovial, rude, hearty, brutal and pugnacious. They lived out of doors, and had but few books. Their favourite amusements were bear-baitings, bull-baitings, cock-fights, dog-fights, foot-ball and rough-and-tumble fighting." [1]

Among such people as these a boy of a contemplative temperament would be sure to attract attention; he would probably make himself known by his fondness for solitude; he would rather shun boisterous companions; his desire for dreamy seclusion would make him frequently the mark of ridicule among his fellows.

It is hardly necessary to say that no trace of such characteristics is to be found in William Shakespeare's history. Poaching rabbits and robbing a deer-park are by common consent attributed to him, but they are not quite the favourite amusements of a studious boy. Of course we can hardly reason from boyhood to manhood with any degree of certainty, but if there is a characteristic in which such reasoning is more to be trusted than most others, it is in this matter of temperament.

Still these are but probabilities, and although they must naturally present themselves to your minds, you are not likely to lay much stress on them.

We will, then, pursue his history in London, where, I am sorry to say, there is little of any certainty known of his doings.

He must have been an active, energetic fellow,

[1] "England of Shakespeare."

and as his after-life proved beyond a doubt, was always keenly bent on the acquisition of money.

Arriving in London, he had no industrial experience save that of a butcher to fall back upon, and no artisan skill or employment to turn to account, and he was by nature, moreover, strongly attracted to the stage and all that belonged to it. It is easy, therefore, to believe the traditional story that to the theatre he went to get a bare living. The first thing that offered itself to keep the wolf from the door, was likely enough the holding at the play-house of the young gentlemen's horses, and this we are assured that he did. He must have been trustworthy, and his organizing capacity soon showed itself in the formation of a band of assistants who were long known as Shakespeare's boys. Ere long, he worked his way into the theatre itself. Betterton's account is, that at first he occupied a very subordinate position—he was "accepted as a serviture," which according to Lowdall, is a sort of supernumerary. Then it is said he became a prompter's call boy; but before long he was accepted as an actor. He never was a great actor, we are told.

Mr. Grant White says:[1]

> "He never seems to have risen high in his profession. The ghost in 'Hamlet,' and Old Adam in 'As You Like It,' were about the topmost points of his achievement in this line."[1]

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 86.

His Connection with the Theatre.

Having once established himself at the theatre as an actor, he soon pushed his way (probably from his great aptitude in that direction) into the management.

The practical work involved in putting a piece, however well written, successfully on the stage, is, I believe, not only laborious, but is a species of work involving very considerable abilities of a very rare sort. There is, moreover, a species of prophetic talent which enables its possessor to foretell what sort of drama will take with the Public, and what alterations and omissions are desirable, if not necessary, in the text, to make it acceptable to the Public taste.

That Shakespeare possessed many of the qualities which would insure success in work of this kind is highly probable. A man does not get himself accepted as the guiding hand in a commercial enterprise like that of a theatre without some special fitness for it. The particular plays in question show in the opinion of many people very unquestionable evidence of manipulation by a hand other than that of the author. Indeed, it may be doubted whether many of the coarse and sometimes repulsive passages which all readers of the Shakespeare plays are familiar with, could possibly have had their origin in the grand and stately intellect to which these plays were due.

The light, trivial and sometimes coarse buffoonery

which were demanded by the audiences of those days, had no natural place in the creations of such a mind and intellect; and I much mistake if the idea has not occurred to thousands, that these passages which vex and distress the mind of the reader, however needful to keep alive the interest of a stage audience in old days, have been at some time or another interpolated by a hand other than that of the author. Thoughts of this kind receive a curious and very significant confirmation from the following extract from a preface written by the poet Pope in an edition of the Shakespeare Plays edited by him in 1725:

> "He had seen a quarto where much of the ribaldry of the lower characters, now preserved in the first Folio, was *in the margin in a written hand*; and another quarto in which a speech and a bit of stage business were carelessly run together: 'The Queen is murdered, ring the little bell.'"

Pope says:

> "In the old edition of 'Romeo and Juliet' there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldry now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present; and I have seen one in particular which seems to have belonged to the playhouse, having the parts divided by lines, and the actors' names in the margin, where several of them, perhaps, were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the Folio."[1]

From the descriptions we have had of Shakespeare, it is more than probable, I think, that he

[1] Appleton Morgan, "Shakespeare in Fact and in Criticism," pp. 212-213.

would manage the introduction of all this stage business very successfully.

The Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford, writing forty-seven years after Shakespeare's death, says:

> "I have heard that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit without any art at all."

Mr. Wilkes, an American gentleman and a staunch supporter of the Shakespeare case, describes him thus:

> "Chiefly remarkable as a good-natured, amiable, easy-going man, with more heart than conscience, of convivial inclination, and full conversational powers supported by readiness of wit."[1]

And others have spoken of him as a jovial sort of fellow, a boon companion, capable of a practical joke and of all sorts of merriment.

But he must have had his hands full. Appleton Morgan speaks of him during his London career as

> "operating two theatres, reading plays for the stage, editing them, engrossing the parts for his actors, and acting himself."

Whether he was also writing Plays such as those which are the subject of our inquiry will be for you to determine.

No evidence exists that he personally was in any way connected with any of these plays as author. I mean, for instance, that no evidence or even tradition has reached us of his having sold or trans-

[1] "Shakespeare from an American point of View," George Wilkes, p. 29.

ferred to any theatrical company any of these plays, or having acted in any way as the person to whom they belonged. In those days (as I have already told you) there was a way provided by the law, and I believe the only way by which a man might secure to himself the property in literary composition.

It was by entering the printed matter at the Stationers' Hall. The Stationers' Company had, under a charter from the Crown, the right and duty of receiving all printed papers brought to them, and registering them in the name of the proprietor on their books. The entry ran in this fashion:

> "A.D. 1600—8 Oct.—Thomas Fysher—entered under the handes of Mr. Rodes and the Wardens a booke called 'A Midsummer Night's Dreame.'"

Sometimes the entry would state by whom the book was written, but this was as often omitted as not. After this sort of entry was made, no one else could legally print or publish the book or work. If the property in the work changed hands, an entry was made of an assignment by the first proprietor to the purchaser.

No such entries were ever made by Shakespeare or by anyone on his account, so far as we know, in respect of any of the plays; on the other hand the records of the Stationers' Company show that many of the Shakespeare Plays were so entered at the Stationers' Hall by various persons between whom and William Shakespeare no connection has been shown to exist; so that, in short, there is not any documentary or written testimony to connect

Shakespeare as an author with the plays of "Measure for Measure," or "Macbeth," or any other of the Shakespeare Plays, which could not be equally produced to prove that he wrote "The London Prodigal," or "Fair Em," or "George à Greene," or "The Yorkshire Tragedy"—always excepting the Folio of 1623.

THE FOLIO.

I say with emphasis, "excepting the Folio of 1623"; and it is time now that we should enter upon its examination, for it is a very curious compilation. It is, as you must have perceived, the stronghold of the Shakespeare case. But you are hardly, I think, aware of the extent to which it became in truth the only substantial authority for imputing the grand plays to his pen.

This Folio, be it remembered, it was which first put together the thirty-six plays which from that time until the present day have gone by the name of the Shakespeare Plays, and vouched for his being their author. Many of them, it is true, had been published separately before (some of them in several editions) in what are known as the Quartos, but this was the first occasion upon which any of them had been grouped together as the plays of William Shakespeare.

Before it appeared, the state of facts was as follows:

1. That numerous plays were in existence and in a printed form which bore the name of Shake-

speare on the title-page, or were publicly asserted to be by him, and sold as such.

2. That these plays readily fall into two groups. (1) Plays, the work of a man of the highest talent, as well as of the widest knowledge and the most extended mental culture. (2) The work of the ordinary playwright of the day.

3. It is evident that the two groups could not have been the work of the same man.

4. Inasmuch then as the words "written by William Shakespeare" could not be relied upon, it is uncertain which of the two groups of plays ought to be attributed to him.

5. On the other hand, it is certain that there was an individual (whom I will call the man in a mask) who wrote plays under the assumed name of William Shakespeare.

Let us consider this state of things.

The following list of forty-two plays shows (says Mr. Appleton Morgan) the plays which were passing in London as William Shakespeare's in the years when he was residing there and was concerned in the management of the Globe and Blackfriars theatres:[1]

	DATE.
"Locrine"	1595
"Titus Andronicus" (F) . . .	1598
"Love's Labour Lost" (F) . . .	1598
"Comedy of Errors" (F) . . .	1598
"Taming of a Shrew" (F) . . .	1598
"Love's Labour Won"	1598
"The Two Gentlemen of Verona" (F) .	1598

[1] "The Shakespearean Myth," p. 289.

	DATE.
"Richard III." (F)	1597
"Midsummer Night's Dream" (F)	1598
"The Merchant of Venice" (F)	1598
"Richard II." (F)	1598
"Romeo and Juliet" (F)	1597
"King John" (F)	1598
"Henry IV." Part I. (F)	1598
"Henry IV." Part II. (F)	1598
"Sir John Oldcastle"	1600
"Thomas, Lord Cromwell"	1600
"Much Ado about Nothing" (F)	1600
"Twelfth Night" (F)	1601
"King Henry V." (F)	1600
"The London Prodigal"	1605
"As You Like It" (F)	1600
"Hamlet" (First Quarto) (F)	1603
"Pericles"	1609
"Puritan Widow of Watling Street"	1607
"Yorkshire Tragedy"	1608
"Arraignment of Paris"	1608
"The Merry Wives of Windsor" (F)	1602
"Measure for Measure" (F)	1604
"King Lear" (F)	1607
"Arden of Feversham"	1608
"Macbeth" (F)	1610
"Comedy of George à Greene"	1607
"Troilus and Cressida" (F)	1609
"Antony and Cleopatra" (F)	1608
"The Winter's Tale" (F)	1611
"The Tempest" (F)	1611
"Two Noble Kinsmen"	1600
"Edward III."	1600
"The Birth of Merlin"	1600
"Mucedorus"	1600
"Merry Devil of Edmonton"	1600

The above dates are given on the authority of Mr. Grant White, and the letter F means inserted in the Folio.

Out of this list of forty-two plays, then, all known to the public as attributed to William Shakespeare, Heminge and Condell only selected twenty-six for their Folio, as follows :

"Titus Andronicus."
"Comedy of Errors."
"Two Gentlemen of Verona."
"Midsummer Night's Dream."
"King Richard II."
"King John."
"Much Ado about Nothing."
"Twelfth Night."
"As You Like It."
"The Merry Wives of Windsor."
"King Lear."
"Troilus and Cressida."
"The Winter's Tale."
"Love's Labour Lost."
"Taming of a Shrew."
"King Richard III."
"The Merchant of Venice."
"Romeo and Juliet."
"King Henry IV." Part I.
"King Henry IV." Part II.
"King Henry V."
"Hamlet."
"Measure for Measure."
"Macbeth."
"Antony and Cleopatra."
"The Tempest."

Leaving out the following sixteen :

"Locrine."
"Sir John Oldcastle."
"The London Prodigal."
"Puritan Widow of Watling Street."
"Arraignment of Paris."
"Comedy of George à Greene."

"Edward III."
"Mucedorus."
"Love's Labour Won."
"Thomas, Lord Cromwell."
"Pericles."
"Yorkshire Tragedy."
"Arden of Feversham."
"Two Noble Kinsmen."
"The Birth of Merlin."
"Merry Devil of Edmonton."

But the Folio contained not twenty-six, but thirty-six plays.

Here, therefore, were produced ten more plays which had never before been printed and published, and were consequently unknown to the public, save so far as any of them may have been put on the stage and seen acted before public audiences.

And of these ten extra plays, whatever may have been the case with four of them, of six it is stated by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, that they had never been heard of until their publication in the Folio of 1623.[1] I will presently give you his statement, and with it the names of these six unknown and unheard-of plays.

This unknown, who adopted Shakespeare's name, was he the author of what I will call the common-place plays or any of them, or of the plays which we know as the Shakespeare Plays? Had he been an ordinary playwright, what motive could he have had for this concealment? It would only be a man of higher education and of the more highly placed classes who would be likely to be ashamed of an

[1] "Outlines," p. 155.

avowed connection with the theatre in those days. At least, so I venture to think.

It was in this state of uncertainty respecting the authorship of the plays that the Folio appeared in the year 1623.

It professed to be a collection of all the plays written by William Shakespeare, and ignoring all the plays of less merit to which his name had hitherto been attached (most if not all of them during his life), it asserted that all the valuable plays were the work of Shakespeare himself; a man who, up to the time of his death in 1616, had on no single occasion made himself known as a learned man, or shown any proofs or signs of superior attainments.

Of course we may assume, I should think, that the two men, Heminge and Condell, who came forward as the publishers of this book, knew what they were about. They knew William Shakespeare personally and intimately, for they were his fellow-actors, and must have known what manner of man he was, and they professed to be in possession of "the true original copies" of these plays. This we learn from their address to their readers. They declare the plays to be "*published according to the true original copies*," and they prefaced the plays by the following heading:

"The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare, containing all his Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, *truly set forth according to their first Original.*"

They talk in their address of "*collecting*" or "*gathering*" them. The executors of William Shakespeare, who had been in his grave seven years,

were of course the only people who were entitled to deal with any manuscript of his. But there is no trace to be found of the intervention of these executors in this publication, or in any of the circumstances connected with it.

These "collected" or "gathered" plays of which they thus possessed the true original copies were thirty-six in number. Out of the thirty-six only sixteen had ever been printed or published before, and what is somewhat remarkable, not to say mysterious, is that six of them had never been heard of before. From whence had they "collected" or "gathered" these last?

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps says "It is either in the Folio of 1623, or in the entry of it on the Registry at Stationers' Hall, that we hear indisputably for the first time of the following plays:—[1]

1. "Taming of the Shrew."
2. "Timon of Athens."
3. "Julius Cæsar."
4. "Coriolanus."
5. "All 's Well That Ends Well."
6. "Henry VIII."

We are now face to face with a very cardinal point in the case, and the first question forced upon us is the truth and *bona fides* of Heminge and Condell.

It is a very curious question.

If their account as to how they got the text of the plays which they printed in the Folio is true, it would indicate that Shakespeare was the author.

[1] "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," p. 155.

On the other hand, if the account is untrue, it was so with the consent and probably at the instance of the true author, whoever he was, that was still hiding behind Shakespeare's mask.

It is time, therefore, that I drew your attention pointedly to the way in which, and the circumstances under which, this book was given to the public.

It professed to be published by these two men, Heminge and Condell; and it was ushered into the world preceded by a dedication to two noblemen, and a long preface addressed to its readers. By-and-bye I shall place in your hands this dedication, and the preface or address to the readers; in short a complete copy of all that preceded the plays in the Folio, including the portrait of Shakespeare and the verses respecting it. For the present it will be enough if I refer to the material parts of it.

The dedication, then, which was drawn up very much in the style usual in those days, commenced by declaring the disinterestedness of the publishers:

> "We have but 'collected' the plays (they said) and done an office for the dead in procuring his orphans guardians without ambition of self-profit or fame, only to keep the memory of so good a fellow, as was our Shakespeare, alive."

From this passage it is plain that the two publishers professed at least to be acting in the matter as volunteers, moved thereto solely by their friendly remembrance of William Shakespeare. This statement serves to negative any idea that they had received any instructions from him to enter upon the task which they had thus spontaneously taken

upon themselves. It is obviously impossible after this statement to surmise that they were under any obligation, legal or otherwise, to accomplish the task they had thus undertaken. So much for the dedication.

The address is headed:

"To the great variety of readers."

I pass over the earlier part, which contains nothing of interest for us. It proceeds as follows:

> "It had been a thing, we confess, worthy to have been wished that the author himself had lived to have set forth and overseen his own writings. But since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death having departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his friends the office of their care and pains to have collected and published them, and so to have published them as where (before) you were abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors that exposed them, even these are now offered to your view cured and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest absolute in their numbers *as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.*
>
> "But it is not our province, who only gather his works and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that read him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will find enough both to draw and hold you, for his wit can no more be hid than it could be lost. Read him therefore, and again and again, and if you do not like him surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his friends, whom if you need can be your guides. If you

need them not you can lead yourselves and others. And such Readers we wish him.

"JOHN HEMINGE.
"HENRIE CONDELL."

I have thought it best thus to read through to you the only part of this address which has any relation to the subject upon which we are engaged. But I wish to call your particular attention to the following statement in it, before I dwell upon the conclusions to be drawn therefrom:

> "And he by death (he had been dead seven years) having departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his friends the office of their *care and pains* to have *collected* and *published* them."

From this dedication and address we learn much as to the motives which induced the publishers to take the matter in hand, and the share they had in producing the book.

In the first place, we learn that they acted, as I have just said, spontaneously, and not in obedience to any duty or obligation, save that of friendship—and by no means for their own profit or fame. Next we are told that all which they had done in the matter was to "collect" or "gather" the plays together, and this office we learn was one demanding "care and pains."

This is what they do tell us. What they do not tell us is from what sources or from what quarters they "collected" the plays—whether from the owners of the theatres to whom the original manuscripts, or their copies, had presumably been handed by the author, or from others of their fellow-actors, or from

those who had printed the quartos and entered them at Stationers' Hall, or from what other sources.

But we are given to understand by the use of the words "collecting" or "gathering," that the plays had to be brought together from different places, and were not obtained from any single source or individual, and that this was work that demanded both "care" and "pains."

It is therefore somewhat surprising to learn from the very next sentence of the address that they had the papers from Shakespeare himself. This is how it runs. Speaking of Shakespeare himself, they say:

> "Who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that *we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.*"

This throws quite a new light on the subject. It appears then that in place of "care" and "pains" in collecting, Heminge and Condell had received his "papers" from William Shakespeare. What papers did they refer to when they spoke of "his papers"? There can be no doubt on this head; for the absence of blot is put forward as a proof of the "easiness" with which he uttered his thoughts —that is, in the composition of his plays. "His papers" therefore obviously meant the original manuscripts of his plays. For no copy, however or by whomsoever made, could, by being free from blots or alterations, possibly be a proof of the ease with which the author composed; and these manu-

scripts they had "received from him"—that is from Shakespeare himself. Now William Shakespeare died in 1616, and the Folio is dated 1623. So far then from taking "care and pains" in "collecting" or "gathering" the plays from the different quarters into which they had been dispersed, Heminge and Condell had had the manuscripts for seven years in their pockets, so to speak. How are these two opposite and inconsistent accounts to be reconciled? That will be one great question—and on the supposition that Shakespeare was the author of the plays it will not be easy to answer it.

Meanwhile, this assertion that Shakespeare handed these papers to the publishers provokes considerable doubt. If they had possessed these manuscripts when Shakespeare died, why did they not make use of them at once? What is to account for this long delay? But, knowing as we do the business-like and careful character in all money matters of Shakespeare, is it not rather difficult to imagine his placing the manuscripts of these popular plays, which must have had a money value, in the hands of these two actors without some bargain of advantage to himself? And, further, is it likely, even if he had no thought of profit, that he would have parted with the original manuscripts of his plays in this way without any directions as to their printing or publishing, or imposing upon these two men some obligation as to the use to be made of them? And yet he must have done so if Heminge and Condell are truthful, for they expressly assert that they acted on their own volition and for

friendship's sake only. The whole story, in the way it is told to us, is very difficult to understand. It is hard to get an idea of the motives and objects of these men from the way in which they tell their story, and the obvious details which they do not tell.

If I seem to elaborate unduly the considerations which are evoked by the very peculiar language of the address of Heminge and Condell, it is because this Folio, and this Folio alone, created originally and has hitherto maintained all that can be called proof of the Shakespeare case. Nothing that he did himself in the course of his life has come to light which identifies him as the writer of these plays, or indeed of any particular play. And as regards what he left behind him, it is not too much, I think, to say that neither history nor tradition can present a parallel to his conduct. No successful author, I think, can be cited who took no pains to have his compositions printed and published during his life, and made no provision for the publication of them after his death. The Quartos were printed and registered, each of them separately, by private individuals, with whom in respect of this matter there is not, so far as I know, the slightest trace of evidence that Shakespeare himself was in any way connected.

The question may perhaps arise in your minds, what motive or object could Heminge and Condell have had in telling a falsehood about their possessing these manuscripts?

On the assumption that Shakespeare was really the writer of the plays, none, except perhaps the

somewhat trifling one that they wanted to make their book as saleable and attractive as possible, and it would add to the value of the book that it was printed from the real original writing of the author.

On the contrary assumption that Bacon or some other person really wrote the plays, there was not only a motive but almost a necessity for stating much that was not true; and if you come to the conclusion that they were playing a deceptive part in the tale they put forward, it may, nay it ought to, go a long way towards convincing you of that authorship which alone rendered such deception necessary.

There is, however, a further fact which may have a very important bearing on these matters when it is recollected that William Shakespeare had been dead seven years before this book was published. And it is this—when you come to compare the plays as printed in the Folio with the same plays as printed during Shakespeare's life in the Quartos, a most wonderful difference is apparent. To some of the plays as they stood in the Quartos, additional lines to the extent of several hundreds have been added. In others, many lines have been omitted. Sometimes a whole scene has been interpolated, many speeches almost re-written, and particular characters elaborated. This remark applies only, of course, to the number of the plays which had been published in the Quartos—and they were only seventeen, I think, out of the whole thirty-six which the Folio contained.

Out of the remaining nineteen you will recollect that thirteen were plays some or most of which had been on the stage, although never published; but six had never been heard of before.

Appleton Morgan says:[1]

> "'Few of us outside the ranks of commentators like Mr. Grant White and others, who give their valuable lives to this study, dream how vast were the emendations and revisions, enlargements and corrections of the old Shakespearean plays given to the world in the Folio of 1623. Mr. White says that in 'Love's Labour Lost' there are inserted new lines in almost every speech. Another play, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' according to Knight, has double the number of lines it originally possessed in 1609. The 'Henry V." has nineteen hundred new lines. The 'Titus Andronicus' has an entire scene added, and the 'Much Ado about Nothing' and the 'Lear' are so altered and elaborated with curtailments here and enlargements there as to lead Mr. Knight to declare that 'None but the hand of a master could have superadded them.'"

Now as the supposed author was long since dead, these emendations and embellishments in the plays, as printed in the Folio, are not easily to be accounted for. It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon the surmises and considerations to which they will probably give rise in your minds.

You will naturally ask yourselves why Shakespeare should have taken this great pains thus to improve his previous work unless he meant to publish the improved version. Perhaps he meant to do so. If cut off by death, he would surely have left

[1] "Shakespearean Myth," p. 234.

them by express words in his will to his executors; or if not, he would have allowed them to fall, as part of his property, into their hands. But, instead of this, he is supposed to hand them to two fellow-actors, without direction or obligation of any sort. Is this conceivable?

Whether they possessed the original manuscripts of the plays is perhaps immaterial, but what is most material is that they clearly did possess the improved and amended version of the plays from which they printed the Folio, together with the text of the other plays which had never been printed before.

The account given then of the Folio, the causes of its publication, and the source or sources from which its most valuable and interesting version of the Shakespeare Plays was drawn, is clouded by insincerity, mystery, and even inconsistency.

Now why should this have been the case? How is it to be accounted for, when a plain unvarnished tale would have been easier? Was it because a false tale had to be told as to the man who wrote the plays?

Was it because the plays had to be attributed to a man who had been seven years in his grave, making it necessary to account for the laborious embellishments of the writer's later handiwork by stating them to be printed from "true original copies," and his improvements a "first original"?

If Heminge and Condell told their tale confusedly, and had to make an inordinate demand on our credulity, would it have been easy with the materials they had in hand, and the end which

they were bound to attain, to manage matters much better?

In thus criticising the language of the publishers in the Folio, it must not be supposed for a moment that it is suggested that Heminge and Condell had any desire to set up for their own purposes, or for the sake of gratifying William Shakespeare, a false claim on his part to have been the writer of these plays. William Shakespeare had been in his grave for seven years, and was beyond the reach of any gratification. Moreover, he never claimed the plays as his offspring during his life, nor was he at any pains to have his name connected with them; and, as regarded themselves, they had no personal interest in the matter, except from the problematical profits to be made out of the publication of the book. If the tale they told was untrue, then for whose benefit was it concocted?

We hardly seem to be at the bottom of the Folio yet, and the causes which generated it.

The contention against the authorship of Shakespeare being founded upon the supposition that some lawyer made use of his name, some evidence has been given by various writers as to the probability thereof; in the days of Elizabeth lawyers were in the habit of writing for the stage.

Speaking of those Elizabethan days, says Judge Holmes:[1]

> "We know from contemporaneous history that it was not an uncommon thing in those days for members of the Inns of Court to be writing for the stage, and it is

[1] "Authorship of Shakespeare," p. 36.

scarcely to be doubted that there was then in fact a class of persons answering perfectly well the description given by Nash."

To the same effect is the statement by Mr. Grant White, who takes the opposite part in this controversy from Judge Holmes:

"Young lawyers in the present day have the Press to fall back upon as a temporary support. 'But in the reigns of good Queen Bess and gentle Jamie there was no Press. There was, however, an incessant demand for new plays. Play-going was the chief intellectual recreation of that day for all classes, high and low. It is not extravagant to say that there were then more new plays produced in London in one month than there are now in both Great Britain and America in a whole year. To play-writing, therefore, the needy and gifted young lawyer of the day turned his mind as he now does to journalism.'"[1]

Again Grant White says:

"At the time of Shakespeare leaving Stratford the drama was rising rapidly in favour with all classes in London.

"There was a constant demand for new plays: ill-provided younger sons of the gentry, and others who had been bred at the Universities and the Inns of Court, sought to mend their fortunes by supplying this demand."[2]

That they should often do so under a feigned name is most probable, as would appear from the following statement by Halliwell-Phillipps:[3]

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," Grant White, p. 73.

[2] See "Shakespeare Myth," p. 85 footnote.

[3] "Outlines," Preface, p. vi.

"It must be borne in mind that actors then occupied an *inferior position in society*, and that *even the vocation of a dramatic writer was considered scarcely respectable.*"

This brings us to close quarters with the cardinal question which up to the present time has been kept somewhat in the background. We have got thus far in the investigation of the circumstances attending the publication of the Folio without making any reference to the possibility that not Shakespeare, but the man in the mask, as I have called him, but whom I will now call "Francis Bacon," was the real author of the plays.

It will be well, therefore, at this point of the inquiry to bring before our minds the view of this Folio publication which the plaintiffs would present to us.

Suppose then, that not Shakespeare, but the man in the mask, whose name they would say was Francis Bacon, was the true author. In his earlier years he had indulged (let us say) his fancy and imagination in the weaving and embellishment of these wondrous dramatic tales until the more serious avocations of life had claimed his time and mental labour; and then it might well be that, after a lapse of many years, his active career in life having come to a close, he reverted to the productions of his earlier days, and cast about for some method whereby he could secure for his handiwork the permanence of a printed record, but still without disclosing his name.

The man whose name he had been permitted to use was long since dead. What so natural as that

he should take the quarto prints in hand; pass them in review; embellish them with amendments and additions; nay, even improve them by omissions; add to them his other plays, some of which, though well known at the theatres, had never yet been printed, give them such additional beauty as a loving hand and the rich stores of his mind could furnish, and publish the whole under the old name, together with six entirely new plays which he had written, but which had never yet seen the light?

What more easy of accomplishment than such a design? Any two of the fellow-actors of Shakespeare would be easily persuaded to lend their names as publishers; and Ben Jonson, who was in the habit of working for Bacon (one of his "good pens" as he used to call them), would see the thing through and keep his secret for him.

How does the prefatory address to the readers square with a supposition of this kind? The name of Shakespeare, recollect, had to be preserved as the author, and the possession of the improved version of the quarto plays, and of the manuscripts of the rest, particularly the six unheard-of plays, had to be accounted for. "Collecting" and "gathering" might do all very well for the plays already printed in quarto, but the manuscripts of the six new plays required some statement as to how they came from the hand of the author, to account for their possession in the hands of the publishers. Hence the passage about "his papers" that had no blot on them. The address might still seem inconsistent in its parts, but it might well pass muster when not ex-

posed to adverse criticism, and the necessity of the case must excuse it.

On the other hand, if Shakespeare was the author, there does not seem any possible excuse for failing to tell a straightforward tale as to how, and when, and why this money-loving man was induced, without prospect of return or benefit, to hand over his highly successful dramas to two men who do not appear to have had any claim whatever on him, and who kept them seven years in their pockets before publishing them?

This comparison between probabilities is one which you will have to think out eventually, when you have the whole case before you.

I will now gather together the results as far as we have gone, and proceed to put them into two opposite scales for appreciation.

One matter is beyond doubt. Heminge and Condell had in their possession a vastly enlarged and improved version of the seventeen quarto plays. They also had in their hands the text of six entirely new plays by the same author. This is a great fact, it cannot mislead or be misinterpreted; it is quite independent of the address which they prefixed to the Folio, and of all and everything which they said or did, and upon which I have previously commented. It stands by itself beyond question or dispute, and is, as it seems to me, pregnant with conclusions which may go a long way to solve the question you are to consider and determine.

It is quite immaterial for our present purpose whether they had the manuscripts of the plays, or

"original copies", as they called them, or not. The important matter is, that they were in possession of the improved and embellished version of these plays, and were able to embody it in the Folio of 1623.

This forces upon us the question—Where did they get it? We may, I think, assume in answer that they had it from the author.

Was this author William Shakespeare or Francis Bacon? Let us weigh the probabilities.

William Shakespeare had been dead seven years. To believe that the publishers had these plays from him, involves the necessity of giving credence to the story told by them, with its contradictions and inconsistencies. We have to accept this marvellous tale, which recounts how that at least seven years and perhaps longer before the Folio appeared, at some time, the date whereof we are not told, on some occasion, the nature of which is not disclosed, for some purpose not explained, and impelled thereto by some motive which can hardly even be conceived, this author, having spent much time and labour in perfecting his plays, proceeded to hand them over to two men of his acquaintance without direction, instruction, or obligation, and having done so forthwith to wash his hands of them altogether.

Such is the load we must place on the Shakespeare scale, and it must be owned that it is well weighted with the improbable.

In the Bacon scale every fact and step in the story was consistent with probability. In his early life, when he had much leisure and few ties or obligations, it was highly probable that he should

seek an outlet and field of action for the creations of his teeming fancy, and an exercise for the lighter movements of his agile mind in some such literary work as the plays; for he was devotedly fond of dramatic entertainment, and had taken the leading part in the preparation of more than one masque; and having indulged his desire to write, it was more than probable that he should seek a method of protecting his reputation by concealing his name. Later on, when he had passed the age of most active life, and had been forced into seclusion, bereft of all official or political work, it was natural and to be expected that he should wish to render perfect the work of his early days; indeed it was his habit so to do with all his compositions; the essays, it is said, were rewritten six or seven times. It was natural, moreover, that having written under the name of Shakespeare, he should desire that all which was truly his should be collected and held separate from the multitude of so-called Shakespeare Plays which had from time to time issued from the press under that name. It was even still more likely that he should wish those of his plays which had never been printed to be secure from corruption and loss by confiding them to the enduring custody of the printing press. Above all, it was natural and probable that he should desire in this way to find publication for the six unknown plays which had never yet seen the light.

What Manner of Man he was.

I must now ask your individual attention while I lay before you such evidence as exists relative to the personal history of W. Shakespeare. It was pretty nearly a century after Shakespeare died before anything was generally known about him. He does not seem to have had any personal acquaintance with the men of note in his day, and he lived and died without apparently attracting attention. But of all the authors whose works have endured, none have had so firm a hold upon the affections as well as admiration of his readers as William Shakespeare. A desire very naturally sprang up to know something of the details of his life, and inquiries were made at Stratford-on-Avon, where he was born, and where he lived and died. The first to take the matter in hand, as I think I told you, was Betterton, the actor, who went to Stratford for the purpose of learning all that he could on the subject. The result of his inquiries was communicated to Rowe, who undertook the task of writing a short biography of him. Since that time the admirers of the Shakespeare Plays have pushed their inquiries eagerly into all the probable or even possible sources of information, with the hope of obtaining further details and incidents of his youthful days. But the general account given by Rowe has not been questioned, nor has it received any additions of importance.

An American writer, Mr. Wilkes says:

> "The truth is, that there were abundant details of the personal life of him open to the hands of the early and even the later biographer, if they had only thought it politic to state all they knew about him. They set out with the desire to describe him as they would like to have him."[1]

And again he says:

> "he, though of a cheerful, amiable disposition, was a calculating, money-making, money-saving man."[2]

However this may be, the result of the inquiries so persistently made have put us in possession of a fairly sufficient picture of the man, his parentage, his surroundings, and the extent of his education. And we know enough to enable us to form a general opinion of his character, his pursuits, and pleasures up to the time when he left Stratford-for London at about the age of twenty-two. Of his capacities or abilities we have no means of judging from anything that he said or did up to that time, as nothing but some very inferior rhymes are imputed to him. It is desirable to take note and bear in mind here, that such materials as we have for thus constructing his biography, were all collected long before any question as to his authorship of the plays had arisen. That question has been the result of his known history, not the cause of his history being known. The evidence obtained concerning him produced some facts which, taken in connection with his supposed works, were somewhat unexpected. It has

[1] "Shakespeare from an American Point of View," p. 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

been made plain and cannot be disputed that William Shakespeare was in truth, when he left his home for London, an almost uneducated man.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillips (and there is no better authority, or one more favourable to Shakespeare) says:[1]

> "His acquaintance with the Latin language throughout his life was of a very limited character. It is not probable that scholastic learning was ever congenial to his taste. It should be recollected that books in most parts of the country were then of very rare occurrence."

And not only so, but there was not a tradition or anecdote connected with him which would lead any one to suppose that he had any taste for learning or literature of any kind. He seems to have led the life of a jovial, active-spirited youth bent on enjoying himself mainly in outdoor pursuits (not always indulged within the bounds of the law), and to have been of a merry, convivial nature, with a decided turn for theatricals. So much so, that while exercising the trade of a butcher, to which he had been apprenticed, he would make a speech and theatrical display when he killed a calf. All this is hardly what one would have expected to find as the youthful career of the author of the Shakespeare plays. As the classical allusions and even quotations from recondite authors which abound in the plays came to challenge a more particular attention, and the multifarous knowledge on all sorts of subjects with which the plays abounded, manifested itself under a closer study of them, the want of proportion be-

[1] "Outlines," p. 41.

tween the works and the education of their supposed author began to press itself in a very uneasy way upon the notice of many devoted readers. No other solution presenting itself of this incongruity, it was natural that the question once started, whether William Shakespeare was in truth the man who wrote the plays which had so long passed unquestioned under his name, should lead to a critical and sustained inquiry into the evidence by which his authorship was supported.

That these marvellous dramas should have been written by a man of deficient education is of course absolutely beyond the reach of possibility. And the facts brought to light, as to the extent of William Shakespeare's education so long as he lived at Stratford, have therefore reduced the question of his authorship to an inquiry whether he could and did, before the writing of the earliest plays, qualify himself by study to exhibit the knowledge and learning which their author unquestionably possessed. Considering the period of our history when the plays were given to the world, it cannot be doubted, I think, that this inquiry is very pertinent. It may well be doubted whether even in the present day, with the universal facilities for instruction which surround us, and the abundance of books which are at hand, four or five years would be a sufficient time to enable a young man to attain to the mental culture evinced by the man who wrote these plays—even if he gave himself up to it, and had nothing else to claim his attention. When I have brought before you the evidence which has

been given on the subject, it will be for you to say whether William Shakespeare ever had so much as five years at his disposal for the purpose; and if so, whether, in the days of Queen Elizabeth he could have had the means of so employing it.

We are limited in the sources of information by the facts and evidence brought before us by the litigants. If it were otherwise I should like to know more than we have before us as to the means of elaborate education which were within the reach of a person in the rank and position of William Shakespeare during the sixteenth century. There were the Universities for those who could avail themselves of their teaching. But I imagine that for all others such a familiarity with the classical authors as the writer of these plays manifests, was in the days of Queen Bess not merely difficult but practically impossible.

The extraordinary display of learning in so many and such varied fields of human knowledge, which meets the eye in every page of the Shakespeare plays, has been almost as much the subject of wonder as the profound philosophy and exquisite poetry contained in them. To appreciate thoroughly the almost universal character of this knowledge, nothing short of an elaborate study of the plays would be needful. I can only invite you to undertake that study if you would do justice to the subject upon which your decision is asked. For the present our inquiries must be necessarily less ambitious. But so uniformly do the signs and proofs of the author's extended reading and multifarious knowledge per-

vade all that he wrote, that you can hardly open a page of the plays without encountering them.

In the case of William Shakespeare—the half-educated young man, fresh from his apprenticeship at Stratford—where could such learning and knowledge have come from?

It is a most pertinent question, for the plays began to make their appearance in a wonderfully short time after his arrival in London. In how short a time I shall presently have to show you with as much accuracy as the subject admits of.

As a matter of fact, if we exclude examinations and all exhibitions of learning acquired with the object of qualifying for some post or position of profit or distinction, I hardly know of any motive for scholarly reading of this extended kind except the very love of the thing. It is the case especially, I think, with that wandering, hungry inquiry into all sorts of subjects which a genuine love of knowledge for its own sake engenders. At present I am only concerned in pointing out that the wide disproportion between the man and his supposed works demanded an explanation; and as none has been forthcoming in the discovery of any explanatory facts, the world was almost driven to ask whether possibly, in this long traditional belief, the plays may not turn out to have been attributed to the wrong man.

It is desperately hard, nay impossible, to believe that this uninstructed, untutored youth, as he came from Stratford, should have written these plays, and almost as hard, as it seems to me, to believe that he should have rendered himself capable of

writing them by elaborate study afterwards. In the strain of these difficulties you are driven to ask why you should accept as fact what is little short of a miracle. What is the guarantee for its truth? Tradition for three hundred years? Yes; but a fact once publicly stated, which it was in the interest of no one to question—nay, which was perhaps put forward and cherished by the man who really wrote the plays, the only man who could have disproved it, or who cared to do so,—would travel on from year to year without let or hindrance from one century to another, growing yearly in respectability, until at length it reached the reverence of age.

It is also to be borne in mind that very little interest in the Shakespeare plays was manifested by anybody until much more than a century had passed. And that no question was raised as to their authorship until the facts concerning Shakespeare himself and his defective education had been sought out by his admirers. And then the wide disproportion between the learning of the man and that displayed in the plays forced upon the world the question, Could this man really have been the author?

It will be seen, therefore, that this question stands on a somewhat different footing from the instances which have more than once occurred in modern times of a speculative attempt to unsettle history, and to subvert beliefs which have been continuously entertained regarding persons or events through long ages.

In these circumstances it is natural and right that all which is offered in proof of so unlikely a thing

should be regarded with a jealous eye. It is for this reason that I have ventured to occupy some portion of your time with the remarkable considerations arising out of the publication of the Folio.

But I hope you will not think that minute criticisms like those which I have offered to your notice are intended to be put forward as matters of greater importance than that which is due to them. At this great distance of time, if the authorship of any given work had any substantial support beyond a continuous tradition, it would be futile to assail it by such criticisms.

If the facts adduced by the plaintiffs do not create in your minds a real and substantial difficulty in reconciling what is positively known about Shakespeare and his utterly defective education with the wealth of learning and rich attainments of the man who wrote the plays, such criticism as the publishers of the Folio have incurred by their contradictory statements would have but little weight.

Well, then, it comes to this: in the year 1587 William Shakespeare fled from Stratford an ignorant youth, destitute of scholarly attainments, and by the year 1593 his name was attached to plays teeming with erudite learning. Let us see how this is to be accounted for.

If on the one side it is maintained that the mental cultivation of Shakespeare must have been inadequate to the exhibition of the wide-spread and profound knowledge displayed in the plays, it is maintained by some on the opposite side that genius did it all.

But can genius do it all? Can genius supply facts, or names of places or things?

An example will the most readily convey my meaning. There are a certain number of towns or of rivers, let us say, in France or Russia. Could a perfectly ignorant man, a man who had read nothing, had been taught nothing, had learnt nothing from books or his fellow-men, tell the names of these towns or rivers by possessing any amount of mental power or genius?

This illustration of my meaning does not carry us far in defining the limits of genius. But it serves to put us on the right track of thought. Perhaps, speaking quite generally, one might say that all which is properly called "knowledge," and certainly all which is properly called "learning," lies outside the field within which genius can play a part. The various and numerous names and classifications by which mankind have agreed to signify the objects and subjects to which they are applied are beyond the reach of either imagination or reason, and cannot be evolved by any mere mental effort. But I will not attempt to explain my meaning further, lest I should further confuse it. For I believe that for all practical purposes the difference between that which is the result of study or learning and that which is brought about by the spontaneous action of the mind will readily present itself to you when individual instances arise.

I do not ask you to draw the line, however roughly, which circumscribes the region within which genius can play its part. It is sufficient to

note that there is such a field or region, and that the knowledge which lies outside of it can only be reached through the medium of the senses or by information obtained from other men or from books. When we read these wonderful plays we are astonished at the vast stores of knowledge—knowledge of places and things, great and little, knowledge of scientific theories and terms, knowledge of medicine, of music, of botany, of husbandry and gardening with their practices and methods; with hawking, hunting, and fishing, and their appropriate terms and names; of history, of the arts of war, of ancient mythology, of witchcraft, of the manners and customs of old Rome, and lastly, of all legal terms, processes and principles, both common and abstruse, with their uses and proper applications,—which abound in line after line of the dramas with which we are dealing.

Where is knowledge like this attained or attainable,—so various, so profuse, so dissimilar,—save in the study of books? What but years of patient and indefatigable study could avail to heap together the material wherewith to furnish the storehouse out of which these plays were elaborated?

But the studies and labours of the man who wrote these plays did not stop here. He had made himself competent to read and appreciate the Italian and French languages, as well as Greek and Latin. He had made himself familiar with the thoughts and expressions of the dead, with the writings of the historians and poets of Greece and Rome, and the dramas and tales of Italy, quoting or copying

their thoughts and imagery as he mingled them with his own conceptions.

All this was the work of the *student*, industry and memory the tools wherewith the work was done. All that lies in fancy or imagination, all that there is of philosophic thought or the portraiture of passion and emotion in man, to be found in these plays, may be laid to the account of the matchless genius with which the author was undoubtedly endowed.

But the varied and inexhaustible catalogue of knowledge which I have endeavoured in vain to enumerate, is at once the result and reward of patient and multifarious reading, and of that alone.

Student and genius, such was the author of the plays, and such no doubt was Francis Bacon.

If Shakespeare is to be accepted as the author of these plays, such must he have been also.

You will remember that at the outset of this inquiry I pointed out to you as a thing which had to be borne in mind throughout, that the *onus probandi* lay distinctly on the plaintiffs.

These plays having passed by the name of Shakespeare for so long a time, the duty devolved upon those who would attribute them to another to prove that assertion. But it is often the case that in the course of an extended inquiry the *onus probandi* is shifted, and something very much to that effect takes place at this point in the present case, I think.

The incapacity of William Shakespeare to have written the plays in the state of ignorance in which he arrived in London having been once established, the onus of showing that his intellectual capacity

had been afterwards enlarged by study devolves, I think, upon those who assert it; and they cannot do so without making a considerable demand upon your credulity.

Starting from a condition of what I must call almost complete ignorance, you are asked to believe that this young country-bred lad set to work, on his arrival in London, to transform himself into a well and widely read scholar, with such assiduity and success that in a very short time—five years as some say, two years as others assert—he had qualified himself to write these plays. In the meanwhile he had to shake off the provincialisms of language with which he must have been thoroughly impregnated, and though his life was not passed among the most polished society, he was able to replace them with the most refined and polished English.

From the contents of the play "Henry VI.," which is declared to be Shakespeare's first effort as a dramatic writer, we learn that the writer was even then familiar with the works of classical authors, and notably with the writings of Plato. In the first act and at the sixth scene of the first part of "Henry VI." occur these lines:

> "Divinest creature, Astræa's daughter,
> How shall I honour thee for this success?
> *Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens,*
> *That one day bloom'd,* and *fruitful were the next.*"

This allusion to Adonis' gardens was so little known to scholars that it puzzled the commentators for a long time. None of the learned appear to have been able to point out the author in whose

writings this fable was to be found. "No mention of any such garden in the classic writings of Greece and Rome is known to scholars," says Mr. Grant White. A recent commentator, James D. Butler, has found out the source of this allusion, says Mr. Donelly.[1] He pointed out that the couplet must have been suggested by a passage in Plato's "Phaedrus," which he translated thus:

> "Would a husbandman (said Socrates) who is a man of sense, take the seeds which he values and wishes to be fruitful, and in sober earnest plant them during the heat of summer in some garden of Adonis, that he may rejoice when he sees them in eight days appearing in beauty?"

It appears, therefore, that William Shakespeare (if he was the author) had so far progressed in his studies by this month of March, 1592, as to have mastered the Greek language thus early; and that he had pushed his reading in directions not traversed by the ordinary run of classic readers.

Is not this a rather startling result to be thus rapidly achieved? It is at least a fair reason for demanding that it should be shown to us how the thing could have been managed.

Forgetting for the moment the work which we know engaged his energies and commanded his hourly attention in the management of two theatres, let us suppose him absolutely free and capable of disposing of his time as he pleased, which way was he to turn to become the master of all this erudition? Always bear in mind the epoch at which this trans-

[1] "The Great Cryptogram," vol. i., p. 16.

formation from a clown to a scholar, from a poacher of rabbits to a lover and devourer of books, was to be brought about; and bearing it in mind, let us try to answer the question, Which way was he to turn? Libraries within the reach of a private individual there were none. Books, the books of the scholar, must have been very rare in any part of London in those days, and it is hard to believe that they could be come at by a youth in the position of this runaway apprentice. History, the history of his native land, had not been compiled in his day. The Chronicles of Holinshed were, I believe, the most notable of the available sources of historical knowledge open to him. Mr. Knight says:

> "The marvellous accuracy, the real substantial learning, of the three Roman plays of Shakespeare, present the most complete evidence to our minds that they were the result of a profound study of the whole range of Roman history, including the nicer details of Roman manners, not in those days to be acquired in a compendious form, but to be brought out by diligent reading alone." [1]

Then again, where was young Shakespeare to put his hand upon the works of Italian authors from whom the author of the plays borrowed so much? Mr. Grant White assures us that he must have possessed a competent knowledge of the Italian language.

If he could have managed, as others no doubt have done, to teach himself to read Italian without the help of an instructor, he still could not have stirred a step without the aid of Italian books. But

[1] Knight's "Biography of Shakespeare," p. 307.

the knowledge of the Italian language was the merest trifle among the attainments which were essential to the writing of the Shakespeare plays. The acquisition of a single language, whether ancient or modern, demands a definite but still a limited amount of brain-work and time; of course I speak only of the perhaps moderate acquaintance with it such as would enable a man to gather the meaning of an author in sentences of no special complication. But it is not easy to see how even this amount of study could have been possible to our busy, bustling manager. He must have been on foot pretty well all the day. What with cutting out passages unsuited to the stage, and shortening whole scenes for effective representation; setting the different parts to the different actors; adding the needful by-play to keep the audience alive while the plot moved forward; drilling, teaching, calling and called hither and thither, perpetually in demand from one spot to another, where was the quiet half-hour to be found for puzzling over the intricacies of a strange tongue? The evenings, I believe, would have been his own, for the plays were a daylight entertainment. But the "Mermaid," I fancy, would have proved a powerful rival to the midnight oil of the student. And in those Elizabethan days could a man such as he and in his circumstances have commanded the means of reading at night?

Italian mastered, our pupil next had Greek to encounter and overcome. He could not have made the reference to the writings of Greek authors, which you will see presently is to be found in the very

first play attributed to him, without having established an intimacy with authors, the very alphabet of whose language must have been a startling sight to him. Here would have been another considerable demand upon his time, and without an instructor it must have been very uphill work.

Meanwhile there was the miscellaneous reading to be accomplished. How was he to make himself familiar with all the machinery of astrology, alchemy, witchcraft and sorcery without the expenditure of much time and research? Where was it all to be found, this old-world learning, with its wild thoughts and impossible dreams? Then there was botany, and the methods and practices of gardening and husbandry, and the names and causes of the ills that beset agricultural crops, with the technical terms connected with hawking, hunting and fishing. The author, too, of the plays (says Judge Holmes) had "a philosophy so subtle and profound as to be beyond the reach of uninitiated and uninstructed genius, of spirits, and ghosts, dreams, visions, and prophecies"; here was more material to be collected and stored, over how vast a field and from recesses how little accessible. Then there was medicine, and the acquaintance to be made of Galen and Paracelsus. On all these subjects and the like much reading might go but a little way. Much of the learning of this sort is only picked up in what I may call the holes and corners of literature, and in the pages of authors little read or known.

In presenting these details to our minds and in trying to imagine this young man at work on them,

one can hardly contemplate the picture with gravity, or treat of it as a possible reality.

But how are we to escape from it? He did not bring his Greek or Italian, and his familiarity with classical authors, from Stratford; that much is certain; and within a very few years he is supposed to be found in possession of them. There is something grotesque and even comical in the position if we try to conceive it. The novelty of such a proceeding, the absence of all natural causes to account for such an undertaking, contribute to make up a picture so widely at variance with all experience, that one feels like dressing up a fairy tale. It is no doubt convenient enough to push aside all the details with which a picture must be filled in if it is to represent the truth. It would be pleasant to be able to say to oneself, This man studied much and made himself learned, without asking how or where or when could he have done it. At the present day, through one channel or another, knowledge even of the most abstruse kind is within the reach of even the very poor, and the desire once formed for its acquisition no insuperable difficulty would be found in satisfying it. But was this so in the days of good Queen Bess?

So far from it that I venture to propound the question, Was it possible in the days of Elizabeth for a young man to obtain a thorough classical education, and a competent knowledge of modern languages, together with the means of pursuing classical studies in any way or at any place, except at the Universities?

1585 and 1592; others, I think, put it a little later; and Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, who is, I think, the most reliable, speaks of a *period of five years, between* 1587 *and* 1592, as the time within which his literary education took place, and thus infers the year 1587 as the date of his arrival.[1]

The only thing which is at all really certain is that Shakespeare was in London by the year 1592, and was at Stratford in the year 1585. But there is not a trace of evidence, that I am aware of, to show that he was certainly in London before 1592.

At the same time, as nothing has been discovered showing that he was certainly resident in Stratford later than 1585, it may be fair to take Mr. Phillipps' dates, and, taking the most favourable view, to assume that he passed a period of five years in London before 1592.

As to the way in which this first period after his arrival in London was employed, Mr. Grant White says:

> "During the seven years, when he was eating the bread of poverty, he must have found time to obtain some knowledge of books (of which, except Bibles and the school-house grammar, there were probably not a dozen in all Stratford, and of which he could have learned nothing from his mother, for she, like his father, could not write her own name), and then to show effectively his powers as a writer."

But this is all surmise; and the surmise is in truth founded entirely upon the assumption of his being the author of the plays.

[1] "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," p. 56.

And Mr. White's surmises do not go very far certainly—"Some knowledge of books." But modest as it is, it is not unlikely as a matter of fact that it may have fairly described all that William Shakespeare could have "found time to obtain."

Whether it would be sufficient to have made him competent to write these plays it will be for you to say.

Proofs of Learning in the Plays.

You can only know and appreciate the character and extent of the learning which the author of these plays had at his command by familiarity with the plays themselves. And it is very difficult, short of the careful study of the plays by yourselves, to impress you adequately with the almost universality of the author's learning, reading, and general information. The only assistance that I can render to you will be in recalling the statements that have been made on this subject by competent critics, and chiefly by those who support the Shakespeare authorship. Foremost among them is Mr. Knight, who thus dilates upon the author's laborious study of Roman history:

> "The marvellous accuracy, the real substantial learning of the three Roman plays of Shakespeare, present the most complete evidence to our minds that they were the result of a *profound study* of *the whole range of Roman history*, including the *minor details of Roman manners*, not in those days to be acquired in a com-

pendious form, but to be brought out by diligent reading alone."[1]

And again:

"In his Roman plays he appears co-existent with his wonderful characters, and to have read all the obscure pages of Roman history with a clearer eye than philosopher or historian. When he employs Latinisms in the construction of his sentences and even the creation of new words, he does so with singular simplicity and unerring correctness."

Appleton Morgan says:

"In 'Antony and Cleopatra,' Charmian suggests a game of billiards. But this is not an anachronism, for the human encyclopædia who wrote that sentence appears to have known that the game of billiards is older than Cleopatra."[2]

Pope observes on the same subject:

"We find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In 'Coriolanus' and in 'Julius Cæsar,' not only the spirit but the manners of the Romans are exactly drawn; and a still nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former and of the latter. No one is more master of the poetical story, or has truer frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakespeare."

No one has studied the plays more profoundly and carefully than Mr. Grant White; and no one is more absolutely convinced than he that William Shakespeare wrote them, and that all those who doubt it are lunatics; on which head I will presently

[1] "Biography of Shakespeare," p. 307.

[2] See "Some Shakespeare Commentators," p. 35.

remind you of the humorous pity he expresses for them. This is what he says of the author's learning.

> "The author had an intimate acquaintance with Latin and Greek authors, with history, politics, the arts of war, natural philosophy, chemistry, horticulture and agriculture, law, medicine and music, French and Italian languages, and the facts of travel; he was able to sport with his knowledge, turning metaphors upon these by use of words and phrases relating to things unknown to the ordinary run of people."

And as to the laborious reading of the author, he can hardly find words strong enough to express his conception of it.

> "His plays and poems teem with evidence that he devoured books and assimilated what he read with marvellous celerity.
>
> "His early plays are full of allusions to ancient classic literature, showing no great brains, but a mind fresh from academic studies."[1]

It is especially to be noted that when reference is made in the plays to the writings of some classical author, it is rarely to what may be called school classics, but to authors whose works are seldom read but by some profound readers. Nor is the classical knowledge exhibited of a superficial character.

I will recall your attention to one or two instances in which the writer of the plays has availed himself of the thoughts of classical writers.

For instance, the passage in "Macbeth,"

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," G. White, p. 256.

"And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!"

is said to be taken from Catullus, thus translated:

"The lights of heaven go out and return;
When once our brief candle goes out,
Our night is to be perpetually slept."

Again the well-known passage in "Hamlet,"

"And from her unpolluted flesh
May violets spring,"

seems to have been borrowed from a passage in Persius, of which this is the translation:

"Will a less tomb composed of smaller stones
Press with less weight upon the under bones?
Posterity may praise them. Why! what though!
Can yet their manes such a gift bestow
As to make violets from their ashes grow?"

Plato's works are not known to have been translated in the sixteenth century, and yet the lines,

"To be, or not to be," etc.

are taken almost *verbatim* from Plato.

The author of the plays had also studied extensively and accurately what medical and surgical works were accessible in his day.

Dr. Bucknill has spent much time in comparing the medical learning of those days with what is to be found in the plays.

He says:

"Original authorities must be referred to in order to compare Shakespeare's medicine with the books and men of his day.

"This has been attempted; the medical works of that age have been studied it is hoped with sufficient success to enable the medical passages of the dramatist to be brought to the test of a fair comparison with the opinions of his professional contemporaries. Perhaps it may be permitted so far to anticipate the proofs as to state that this research has been rewarded by establishing the fact that Shakespeare's theoretical knowledge of medicine closely corresponded with that prevailing at the time among its professors, and that he had authority even for his trivialities and most glaring absurdities."[1]

And again:

"It is plain that he had read widely in medical literature."

"Italian and French we may be sure were not taught at Stratford Grammar School," says Grant White; and he goes on to say:

"Can we reasonably doubt that he was sufficiently an Italian scholar to read 'Ariosto Berni,' and 'Giraldi Cinthio' in the original?"[2]

Says Mr. Grant White:

"There is no more convincing proof that he was so than the fact that he borrowed the subjects of so many of his plays from French or Italian writers.

"The story of 'Othello' was taken from the Italian of Cinthio's 'Il Capitano Moro,' of which there was no translation:

"'Cymbeline' was drawn from an Italian novel of Boccaccio, not known as translated.

"Several of the plays from Belleforest's 'Histoires Tragiques.'"[3]

Nor can it be stated with truth that he availed

[1] Dr. Bucknill's "Shakespeare's Medical Knowledge," p. 11.
[2] "Life and Genius," p. 34. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

himself of English translations. A curious proof that he had resource to the original Italian, even when an English translation existed, is pointed out by Mr. Grant White in the following:

> "Othello, in the dawning of his jealousy, chides Desdemona for losing the handkerchief which was his first love-token. He tells her:
>
> "'There 's magic in the web of it.
> A sybil that had numbered in the world
> The sun to course two hundred compasses
> In her "prophetic fury" sewed the work.'
>
> "Now in the 'Orlando Furioso' there is a passage about a tent which Cassandra gave to Hector, from which this expression of 'prophetic fury' is evidently taken.
>
> "It has been thus rendered in English by Rose as follows:
>
> "'Two thousand tedious years were nigh complete
> Since this fair work was fashioned by the love
> Of Trojan maid, warmed with *prophetic heat*
> Who 'mid long labour and 'mid vigil sore,
> With her own fingers all the storied sheet
> Of the pavilion had embroidered o'er.'"

Here we have the identical thought, and in their Italian form, the very words, for in the original Italian the very words "furor prophetico" are used. The expression is a peculiar one applied to such a subject, and in the translation which I have last quoted they are softened into "*prophetic heat.*" In Shakespeare's time the only translation of the "Orlando Furioso" was by Sir John Harrington in 1591, and in that no such phrase as "*prophetic fury*"

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 35.

is to be found. It is plain, therefore, that the author of "Othello" had studied the original Italian, from which alone he could have got "prophetic fury."

Mr. Grant White gives another instance of a similar kind. "When Iago utters the often-quoted lines

'Who steals my purse steals trash,' etc.

he repeats with little variation a stanza of Berne's 'Orlando Innamorato,'" and he translates the lines thus:

"The man who steals a horn, a horse, a ring,
Or such a trifle, thieves with moderation
And may be justly called a robber-ling;
But he who takes away a reputation,
And pranks in feathers from another's wing,
His deed is robbery, assassination,
And merits punishment so much the greater
As he to right and truth is more a traitor."

No English translation (he adds) has been made of the "Orlando Innamorato."[1]

The Learning of the Plays.

Only a miracle of studiousness (says Mr. Donelly) could have acquired in a few years, upon a basis of ignorance and bad habits, the culture and refinement manifested in the *earliest plays*, and but a very few years elapsed between the time when he fled from Stratford an ignorant boy, and the plays began to appear.[2]

[1] "Life and Genius," p. 36; also Lee's "Life of W. Shakspeare," p. 236.

[2] Donelly's "Great Cryptogram," vol. i., p. 42.

Such reading as the plays give evidence of in their author is not an affair of days and months, but of years. And again I say, what should induce a man in the hot and most successful pursuit of wealth as a theatrical manager, to turn aside from this mine of gold to transform himself into a philosopher, a linguist, a classical scholar, and a trained lawyer? No course of study could be mapped out for him that would enable him to write the plays. The man who wrote them *must* have studied for study's own sake.

The more that the mind is allowed to dwell upon the idea that, though Shakespeare left Stratford in the densest ignorance,[1] it might have been that he could have rendered himself capable of the plays by reading after he got to London, the more impossible it shows itself to be.

We do not know much, it is true, of what he did after he got to London, but we know enough.

We know, negatively, that he did not shut himself up or lead the life of a recluse or a student. We know, affirmatively, that with surprising celerity he worked his way to be the manager, and perhaps partner, at one, if not two theatres, and had set the stream running which was soon to make him very wealthy. In 1597 he was already rich enough to buy New Place, the best house in his native town.

No seclusion, no study was possible to such a life as this. Could he lead simultaneously two such opposite lives as that of the bustling busy stage manager and the thoughtful student?

[1] See "Outlines," p. 41 and 63.

Would the avocations of the one be compatible with the demands of the other? In the records of literature is there a parallel case?

But to feel the full force of these considerations, let us assume that William Shakespeare really was endowed by nature with a strong poetic faculty. What are the subjects, or I would rather say, what would be the nature of the subjects which would naturally present themselves to his mind for the exercise of his poetic power? Country bred, and then brought into contact when he got to London with the commonplace incidents of daily life, he would either have sung the rural beauties of his native county, or he would probably have trodden in the steps of the playwrights of the day. One could imagine him composing a drama with some such title as "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" or "Fair Em." But that he should have tried his 'prentice hand on a classical or mythological subject as the first effort of his muse, and clothed his thoughts in perfectly pure and elegant English, calling it "the first heir of his invention," is hardly credible.

I do not think I should assist you, but rather add to your difficulties, if I here called your attention to the poem "Venus and Adonis," which is commonly attributed to Shakespeare. It certainly must have been a surprising performance for a young and uneducated Warwickshire lad—fresh from his county, and of a certainty speaking the dialect of that county.

For remember that we are dealing with the reign of Elizabeth. In those days each county had as it were almost a dialect of its own. We have been

told that when a new Parliament met, the constituencies could be often recognized by the talk of their members. The English tongue in its purity was talked only in Middlesex and at the Court. And it is in this pure English that the Stratford apprentice is supposed to have told his mythological tale. To me, I confess, this is hard to believe, but it is for you to judge. To some people I am aware that it does not seem to be even surprising; to Mr. Grant White, for instance, the staunch upholder of the Shakespearean authorship. For he goes further, and declares that he feels confident that Shakespeare had written the "Venus and Adonis" before he left Stratford. This is what he says:

> "Let who will believe that he went that journey without a manuscript in his pocket. For to suppose that a man of poetic power lives until his twenty-first year without writing a poem which he then rates higher than he afterwards will rate any of his works is to set aside the history of poetry and to silence those years which are the most affluent of fancy and most eager for expression. With 'Venus and Adonis' written, if nothing else, but I think it not unlikely a play, he went to London and sought a 'patron.'"[1]

The difficulty in believing that young Shakespeare could have written this poem at all seems to me to be enormously increased by supposing that it was written at Stratford, where the names even of Venus and Adonis were in all probability utterly unknown, not only to himself but to the whole population, and wherein no book connected with the subject was to be found.

1 "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 79.

If I were to ask you to form a definite opinion upon the authorship of this poem of "Venus and Adonis," it would be only trying to solve one riddle by introducing another hardly more easy of solution.

I will return to the subject of the plays. I shall have before long to bring to your notice what has been said by eminent men as to the intellectual character of the man who wrote these plays; and, so far as I can, to put together some of the most striking instances of his learning which have been collected by others.

His Actual Work at the Theatres, and as an Actor; and the Wealth he Obtained.

While we are calculating the possible achievements of a life given over to study, and the acquirement of proficiency in the languages and writings of both Greek and Latin authors, and the familiarity with both prose and poetry of the Italians, Shakespeare himself was undoubtedly devoted to a most busy and active life. All his biographers are agreed, I think, in this, that from a very early date after his first arrival in London, and his connection with the theatres, he filled a prominent place in their management, and even in the ownership of them.

> "In 1589, we have undeniable evidence that he had not only a casual engagement, was not only a salaried servant as many players were, but was a shareholder in the Company of the Queen's Players with other shareholders below him on the list."[1]

[1] "Biography," C. Knight (People's Edition), p. 168.

This is the statement of Mr. Knight, whose biography of Shakespeare is not surpassed for fullness of detail and accuracy; and it applies to the year 1589, only two years after his arrival in London in 1587.

Again, in a subsequent passage he says, after referring to certain orders made by the Corporation of London in the year 1575:

> "In that very year, James Burbage and others, being servants of the Earl of Leicester, erected their theatre amidst the houses of the great in the Blackfriars, absolutely out of the City jurisdiction. *Within fourteen years from the period of its erection, William Shakespeare was one of its proprietors.*"[1]

This would be in 1589.

Pursuing Shakespeare's career in connection with the theatres, for the comparatively short period of nine to eleven years, and the wealth which his exertions brought him from it, Mr. Knight says:

> "From a paper now before me (says Malone), which formerly belonged to Edward Alleyn, the player, our poet appears to have lived in Southwark, near the Bear-Garden, in 1596. . . . The neighbourhood does not seem to have been a very select one, if we may judge from another name on this list. . . . Mr. Hunter has discovered a document which shows that William Shakespeare was, in 1598, assessed in a large sum to a subsidy upon the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate."[2]

He was also assessed in the liberty of the Clink, Southwark, in 1609, but whether for a dwelling-house or for his property in the Globe is not evident.

In 1597 (only ten years from his first arrival), he

[1] "Biography," C. Knight, p. 177. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

became the purchaser of the largest house in Stratford, and he lived there with his family till the time of his death in 1616. His active duties as a manager, and his interest as a shareholder in these two theatres, must have been in all probability the chief sources of his rapidly accumulating wealth; but his occupation as an actor also could not fail to make considerable demands upon his time. Mr. Knight says:

> "His occupation as an actor, both at the Blackfriars, and the Globe, the one a winter and the other a summer theatre, continued till 1603 or 1604. His interest as a proprietor of both theatres existed in all probability till 1612."

Another most important consideration is introduced by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, who speaks with much certainty of the fact that Shakespeare must have taken part in the provincial tours which his companies made.

> "The actors of those days were as a rule individual wanderers, spending a large portion of their time at a distance from their families, and there is every reason for believing that this was the case with Shakespeare, from the period of his arrival in London until near the end of his life. All the old theatrical companies were more or less of an itinerant character, and it is all but impossible that he should not have already commenced his provincial tours. But what were their direction, or who were his associates, have not been discovered."[1]

This is the statement of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, and if his conclusion was correct, it must have added considerably to the difficulty of supposing that William Shakespeare had at this time devoted him-

[1] "Outlines," p. 62.

self to a life of study and an extensive consumption of books.

I have reserved for separate consideration a further and peculiar species of knowledge which the writer of the Shakespeare plays possessed, a possession which throughout his writings he was continually evincing. I allude to his perfect familiarity with not only the principles, axioms and maxims, but the technicalities of English law; a knowledge so perfect and intimate that he was never incorrect and never at fault.

Mr. Grant White describes its character very faithfully as follows:

> "The phrases peculiar to other occupations serve him on rare occasions by way of description, comparison or illustration generally when something in the scene suggests them, *but legal phrases flow from his pen as part of his vocabulary and parcel of his thought.* Take the word "purchase" for instance, which, in ordinary use means to acquire by giving value, applies in law to all legal modes of obtaining property except by inheritance or descent; and in this peculiar sense the word occurs five times in Shakespeare's thirty-four plays, and only in one single instance in the fifty-four plays of Beaumont and Fletcher."[1]

And again:

> "It is said that legal phrases might be picked up by one who attended ordinary proceedings at Nisi Prius. But 'fine and recovery,' 'statute merchant,' 'purchase,' 'indenture,' 'tenure,' 'double voucher,' 'fee simple,' 'fee farm,' 'remainder,' 'reversion,' 'forfeiture.' This conveyancers' jargon could not have been picked up by hanging about the Courts. Shakespeare uses these even

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 74.

in his earliest plays, and always correctly and with propriety."[1]

The peculiar way in which this familiarity with the law and its phrases showed itself in the plays has been enlarged upon by others.

Senator Davis says, speaking of the constant legal allusions in the plays:

> "I know of no writer who has so impressed into his service the terms of any science or art. They come from the mouth of every personage, from the Queen, from the child, from the Merry Wives of Windsor, from the Egyptian fervour of Cleopatra, from the love-sick Paphian Goddess, from the violated Lucrece, from Lear, Hamlet and Othello, from Shakespeare himself soliloquizing in his sonnets, from Dogberry and Prospero, from riotous Falstaff and melancholy Jacques; these emblems of his industry were woven into his style like the bees into the imperial purple of Napoleon's coronation robes."[2]

Lord Campbell says:

> "We find in several of the histories Shakespeare's fondness for law terms, and it is still more remarkable that whenever he indulges this propensity he uniformly lays down good law. While novelists and dramatists are constantly making mistakes as to the law of marriage, of wills and inheritance, to Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounds it, there can be neither demurrer, bill of exception, nor writ of error."[3]

Senator Davis further expresses his view of this remarkable characteristic of the author in these words:[4]

[1] Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 75.
[2] "The Law in Shakespeare," p. 51.
[3] "Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements," p. 61.
[4] "The Law in Shakespeare;" p. 4 (Senator Davis).

"We seem to have something more than a sciolist's temerity of indulgence in the terms of an unfamiliar art. No legal solecisms will be found. The abstrusest elements of the common law are impressed into a disciplined service with every evidence of the right and knowledge of commanding. Over and over again, where such knowledge is unexampled in writers unlearned in the law, Shakespeare appears in perfect possession of it. In the law of real property, its rules of tenure and descents, its entails, its fines and recoveries, and their vouchers and double vouchers; in the procedure of the Courts, the method of bringing writs and of arrests, the nature of actions, the rules of pleading, the law of escapes and of contempt of Court; in the principles of evidence, both technical and philosophical, in the distinction between the temporal and spiritual tribunals, in the law of attainder and forfeiture, in the requisites of a valid marriage, in the presumption of legitimacy, in the learning of the law of prerogative, in the inalienable character of the Crown, this mastership appears with surprising authority."

The mode in which this knowledge was pressed into the service on all occasions to express his meaning and illustrate his thought, was quite unexampled. He seems to have had a special pleasure in his complete and ready mastership of it in all its branches. As manifested in the plays this legal knowledge and learning had therefore a special character which places it on a wholly different footing from the rest of the multifarious knowledge which is exhibited in page after page of the plays. At every turn and point at which the author required a metaphor, simile, or illustration, his mind ever turned first to the law. He seems almost to have thought in legal phrases—the commonest of legal expressions were ever at the end of his pen in de-

scription or illustration. That he should have descanted in lawyer language when he had a forensic subject in hand, such as Shylock's bond, was to be expected. But the knowledge of law in "Shakespeare" was exhibited in a far different manner: it protruded itself on all occasions, appropriate or inappropriate, and mingled itself with strains of thought widely divergent from forensic subjects.

It was legal knowledge thus widespread and profound that young Shakespeare had to acquire if he would write as our author wrote. He might write as well, exhibit philosophy as marvellous, delight his readers with imagery and fancies as exquisite, portray passion and emotion with fidelity and force as great, but without the regular training of a lawyer he could not think and express himself after the fashion in which the writer of Shakespeare's plays uniformly does.

Now let me ask whither do these conclusions lead? Is it seriously suggested that William Shakespeare ever had a regular legal training? Has it ever been shown that such a training was possible consistently with what we know of his life? Those who insist that he wrote these plays have endeavoured to show that he had been in some indistinct way connected with the legal profession; and it has been often suggested that he was for a time a clerk in an attorney's office. In truth they could not well stop short of this.

Mr. Collier wrote to Lord Campbell to ask his opinion as to the probability of this being true: his answer was as follows:

> "You require us to believe implicitly a fact of which, true, positive and irrefragable evidence in his own handwriting might have been forthcoming to establish it. * * * * * * *
> It might have been reasonably expected that there would have been deeds or wills witnessed by him still extant, and after a very diligent search none such have been discovered." [1]

It cannot be doubted but that Lord Campbell was right in this. No young man could have been at work in an attorney's office without being called upon continually to act as a witness, and in many other ways leaving traces of his work and name. There is not a single fact or incident in all that is known of Shakespeare, even by rumour or tradition, which supports this notion of a clerkship. And after much argument and surmise which has been indulged in on this subject, we may, I think, safely put the notion on one side, for no less an authority than Mr. Grant White says finally that the idea of his having been clerk to an attorney has been "blown to pieces." What we have to seek for is not the possibility that a smattering of legal phraseology might have been picked up in the course of ordinary life and contact with affairs by him as by anybody else.

To acquire a perfect familiarity with legal principles, and an accurate and ready use, of the technical terms and phrases not only of the conveyancer's office, but of the pleader's chambers and the courts at Westminster, nothing short of employment in some career involving constant contact with

[1] "Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements," p. 111.

legal questions and general legal work would be requisite. But a continuous employment involves the element of time—and time was just what the manager of two theatres had not at his disposal. In what portion of Shakespeare's career would it be possible to point out that time could be found for the interposition of a legal employment in the chambers or offices of practising lawyers? We do not, it is true, know much of the minor details of his life, but we have trustworthy information as to the employments in which the different sections of his life were passed. It is beyond doubt that at an early period he was called upon to abandon his attendance at school and assist his father, and was soon after, at the age of sixteen, bound apprentice to a trade.[1]

While under the obligation of this bond, he could not have pursued any other employment. Then he leaves Stratford and comes to London. He has to provide himself with the means of a livelihood, and this he did in some capacity at the theatre. No one doubts that. The holding of horses is scouted by many, and perhaps with justice, as being unlikely and certainly unproved; but whatever the nature of his employment was at the theatre, there is hardly room for the belief that it could have been other than continuous, for his progress there was so rapid. Ere long he had been taken into the company as an actor, and was soon spoken of as a "Johannes Factotum." His rapid accumulation of wealth speaks volumes for the constancy and activity of his ser-

[1] See Halliwell's "Life of Shakespeare," p. 89.

vices. One fails to see when there could be a break in the current of his life at this period of it, giving room or opportunity for legal or indeed any other employment.

"In 1589," says Mr. Knight,

> "we have undeniable evidence that he had not only a casual engagement, was not only a salaried servant, as many players were, but was a shareholder in the company of the Queen's players with other shareholders below him on the list." [1]

This (1589) would be *within two years of his arrival in London*, which is placed by White and Halliwell-Phillipps about the year 1587. The difficulty in supposing that, starting with a state of ignorance in 1587, when he is supposed to have come to London, he was induced to enter upon a course of most extended study and mental culture, is almost insuperable. Still it was physically possible, provided always that he could have had access to the needful books. But this legal training seems to me to stand on a different footing. It is not only unaccountable and incredible, but it is actually negatived by the known facts of his career.[2]

By 1592 (according to the best authority, Mr. Grant White), several of the plays had been written. "The Comedy of Errors" in 1589; "Love's Labour Lost" in 1589; "Two Gentlemen of Verona" in 1589 or 1590; "Titus Andronicus" in 1591; all the three parts of "Henry VI." in 1590 to 1592; "Romeo

[1] "Biography," C. Knight, People's Edition, p. 168.

[2] See G. White's "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 88.

and Juliet" in 1591 to 1592; "The Troublesome Reign of King John" was printed in 1591. "In March, 1592," says Halliwell-Phillipps, "a new drama entitled 'Henry VI.' was brought out by Lord Strange's servants. It was probably William Shakespeare's first complete dramatic work." With this catalogue of dramatic work on hand (and it must be added to, for he is credited with "Pericles" and "The Midsummer Night's Dream" by Mr. Knight during the same period), was it possible, it may well be asked, that he could have taken a leading part in the management and conduct of two theatres? and, if Mr. Phillipps is to be relied upon, taken his share in the performances of the provincial tours of his company—and at the same time devoted himself to the study of the law in all its branches so efficiently as to make himself complete master of its principles and practice, and saturate his mind with all its most technical terms?

I must not omit in this place to remind you of the very curious proof which is contained in the play of "Hamlet" of the thorough legal studies which the author of the plays must have gone through.

It is to be found in the celebrated dialogue between the two clowns.

It has never been doubted but that this dialogue, which I will presently read to you, was intended as a travesty of the learned discussion between the counsel and the judges in the case of Hales *v.* Pettit.

The report of that case is found in the black-letter reports of Plowden. You will remember what

the late Lord Campbell said of it when he was asked by Mr. Collier whether there was evidence in the plays that the author was a trained lawyer.[1] Lord Campbell went through the thirty-six plays of the folio, and his conclusion was that in twenty-three of them there were legal phrases or allusions which prove the writer to have been a lawyer. He then refers to the clowns' talk in "Hamlet," and describes the case of Hales *v.* Pettit in great detail. I can only give you a slight sketch of the legal argument of which the clowns' dialogue is obviously a travesty.

Sir James Hales was so frightened at some proceedings which had been threatened against him that he destroyed himself by drowning. His widow was entitled, on his death, to certain property. But as soon as he had committed a felony by killing himself this property became forfeited to the Crown, by whom it had been granted to the defendant, and whether the widow or the defendant were entitled to the property was the question.

For the widow it was contended that the offence of suicide being the killing of man's self, it could not be completed in his lifetime, for as long as he was alive he had not killed himself. And her Counsel argued after this fashion—"Two things were to be considered, first, the cause of death; secondly, the death ensuing the cause, and these two make the felony, and without both the felony is not consummate," etc. On the side of the defendant Sergeant Walsh argued after this fashion—"The act of felony consists of three parts; the first is the imagi-

[1] "Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements" (Introduction), p. 33.

nation whether or not it is convenient for him to destroy himself, and what way it can be done; the second is the resolution, which is a determination of the mind to destroy himself; and the third is the perfection, which is the execution of what the mind had resolved to do."

The Court gave judgment for the defendant, which was in substance for the Crown. And they delivered themselves thus:

> "Sir James Hales is dead. How came he to his death? By drowning. And who drowned him? Sir James Hales. And when did he drown him? In his lifetime; and the act of the living man was the death of the dead man, for Sir James Hales being alive caused Sir James Hales to die."

It is of this style of legal argument that the dialogue in "Hamlet" is pretty generally admitted to be a parody or travesty. They are discussing the burial of Ophelia, who had drowned herself.

> "1st CLOWN—Is she to be buried in a Christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?
>
> "2nd CLOWN—The Crowner has sat upon her, and he finds it Christian burial.
>
> "1st CLOWN—How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?
>
> "2nd CLOWN—Why, 'tis found so.
>
> "1st CLOWN—It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water comes to him, and drown him, he

drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

"2nd CLOWN—But is this law?

"1st CLOWN—Ay, marry, is 't crowner's quest law."

As I told you when discussing more at large the play of "Hamlet," the first publication of that play and the first occasion, so far as appears, when the name of Shakespeare was attached to it, was in the year 1603. This was followed by a second publication in the very next year, 1604, said to be "newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again."

On comparing the two Quartos, which are both in existence, the additions and improvements are very marked. One of them is very curious. It occurs in this dialogue (which I have just been discussing) between the two clowns, about the burial of Ophelia. The passage in which the obvious similarity with the arguments of the lawyers in the case of Hales *v.* Pettit, reported by Plowden, is not to be found in the Quarto of 1603, but is to be found in the Quarto published the very next year, 1604—in which the whole scene is obviously re-written and much elaborated.

I am unwilling to leave this subject of legal learning without calling your attention to one or two more of the instances in which our author went out of his way to introduce purely legal ideas and expressions to illustrate his subject.

In "Love's Labour Lost," for instance, he makes the fair Maria pun upon a well-known legal distinction. The indulgence of a kiss is spoken of as a grant of "pasture."

"BOYET—So you grant pasture for me?
"MARIA—Not so, gentle beast. My lips are no common, though several they be.
"BOYET—Belonging to whom?
MARIA—To my fortunes and to me."

How many poets (even if lawyers by profession and training) would have ever thought of describing a liberty to kiss as a "grant of pasture"? With the author of Shakespeare's Plays such trains of thought were ever present.

I do not propose to discuss with you the authorship of the poetry known by the name of "Shakespeare's Sonnets." It is, I believe, pretty well accepted by both sides in this controversy that they were written by the author of the plays. And if so, they afford strong proofs that he had a legal education.

I will refer to two of them.

SONNET XLVI.

"Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,
A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes;
But the Defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impanneled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart;
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part:
As thus—mine eye's due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right thy inward love of heart."

SONNET CXXXIV.

"So now I have confess'd that he is thine,
And I myself am *mortgag'd* to thy will,
Myself I'll *forfeit*, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still;
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous and he is kind;
He learn'd but *surety-like* to write for me,
Under that *bond* that him as fast doth bind.
The *statute of thy beauty* thou wilt take,
Thou usurer that put'st forth all to use,
And *sue a friend* came *debtor* for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me;
He pays the whole, and yet I am not free."

These various passages are surely enough, and more than enough, to establish the fact that the author of the plays had a surprising familiarity with the terms and phraseology of the law, and all their applications and methods.

I have already pointed out that at no period of William Shakespeare's life could he have devoted himself to the study of the law so as to become acquainted with the practical work of that profession.

But let me ask you this question: did you ever meet with or hear of an instance in which a young man in this country gave himself up to legal studies and engaged in legal employments, which is the only way of becoming familiar with the technicalities of practice, unless with the view of practising in that profession? I do not believe that it would be easy, or indeed possible, to produce an instance in which

the law has been seriously studied in all its branches, except as a qualification for practice in the legal profession.

With these remarks relative to the surprising familiarity with all legal forms and processes exhibited by the author of the plays, we come to an end, I think, of the cumulative burthen of acquired knowledge which the shoulders of young Shakespeare must needs have supported if he wrote the plays.

I pass from this review of the studious labours which the author of the plays must have undertaken, to some other considerations which bear more directly perhaps, upon the part which William Shakespeare would seem to have actually played in these matters.

There are some questions, which any one entering upon an examination of Shakespeare's capacity to have written these plays, will be almost sure to ask himself.

And this is one of them:

In what light did those among whom he lived, and those with whom he came into daily contact at the theatres of which he had the partial or entire management, regard him?

And the other playwrights of the day, such as Greene, Peele, Marlowe, Webster and Ford, what did they think of him? If he was successful, whether deservedly or not, it is probable that they would have been jealous. Here were thirty-six plays in the Folio ascribed to him; besides these I have given you a list of at least nineteen more pass-

ing under his name, and there were, I believe, many more. They must surely have known that a vast proportion of these fifty or sixty plays were not all due to his pen. And then the different character of the plays compared one with another. Even the subjects or tales which formed the basis of a great many of what we now call the Shakespeare Plays were drawn so largely from Italian or other foreign or historical sources, that, among the commonplace dramas whose titles were enough to give them a different character, they could hardly have failed to attract attention, at any rate the attention of his compeers. Did they believe that these plays were the offspring of young William Shakespeare the actor, from whose conversation, in what with many must have been almost daily intercourse, they could not have failed to discover the absence of mental culture and the proofs of defective education, to say nothing of the strong provincial vocabulary which undoubtedly he must have betrayed. To appreciate the full value of these thoughts, let me remind you of the dates assigned to the writing of the earliest plays by Mr. Grant White.

"Love's Labour Lost,"	in 1588 or 9.
"The Comedy of Errors,"	in 1589.
"Two Gentlemen of Verona,"	in 1589 or 90.
"Titus Andronicus,"	in 1591.
"Love's Labour Won,"	in 1592 or 4.
"The three parts of Henry VI."	in 1590 or 92.
"Romeo and Juliet,"	in 1591 or 92.

Others on the same question of dates state as follows:

Mr. Staunton, whose edition of the Shakespeare plays is well known, says:[1]

> "Mr. Knight surmises that the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Love's Labour Lost,' 'The Comedy of Errors,' 'Pericles,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Titus Andronicus' were written between 1585 and 1591, and I agree with him."

And he adds:[2]

> "Like the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' the 'Love's Labour Lost' bears unmistakable traces of the author's earliest style."

Mr. Sidney Lee says:

> "To 'Loves Labour's Lost' may reasonably be assigned priority in point of time of all Shakespeare's dramatic productions. Internal evidence alone indicates the date of composition, and proves that it was an early effort; but the subject-matter suggests that its author had already enjoyed extended opportunities of surveying London life and manners, such as were hardly open to him in the very first years of his settlement in the metropolis. 'Love's Labour's Lost' embodies *keen observation of contemporary life in many ranks of society*, both in town and country, while the speeches of the hero Biron clothe much sound philosophy in masterly rhetoric. Its slender plots stands almost alone among Shakespeare's plots in that it is not known to have been borrowed, and stands quite alone in *openly travestying known traits and incidents of current social and political life.* The names of the chief characters are drawn from the leaders in the civil war in France, which was in progress between 1589 and 1594, and was anxiously watched by the English public.

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[1] See Staunton's "Shakespeare" (Introduction to "Two Gentlemen of Verona").

[2] *Ibid.* (Introduction to "Love's Labour's Lost").

> The play was revised in 1597, probably for a performance at Court. It was first published next year, and on the title-page, which described the piece as 'newly corrected and augmented,' Shakespeare's name first appeared in print as that of author of a play."[1]

There were therefore five or six plays inclusive of "Henry VI." attributed to him between the date of his coming to London in 1587 and the year 1591. I am not aware of any distinct evidence as to the time when these plays first appeared on the stage, except of course the play of "Henry VI.," which, as I have told you, was first acted on the 3rd of March, 1592. The above dates are the times not when the plays were first *acted*, but when they are supposed to have been written. Moreover it is said that until 1598, ten years after his first arrival in London, Shakespeare's name was not printed on any of them. Nor was any other name attached to them in print or publication. But they were brought to the theatre by him it is believed, and they passed as his.

What must those who came into daily contact with him at the theatres have thought of the sudden appearance of the five or six plays, which in the tales or subjects on which they were founded, no less than in their dialogues and classical allusions, stood apart very obviously from the ordinary run of dramatic pieces? Did they recognize in William Shakespeare the advent of a classical scholar or a youthful genius among them?

I don't know whether he claimed in conversation with those among whom he lived to have been the

[1] "Life of Shakespeare," Sidney Lee, p. 50.

author of any of these plays. But it is clear, I think, from the language of a publication called "A Groatsworth of Wit," written at this time by a man named Greene, that the play of "Henry VI."—a line of which was parodied by Greene—was, for some reason, attributed to Shakespeare.

It is time that this paper should be brought to your particular attention.

THE "GROATSWORTH OF WIT."

In 1592, a dramatist named Robert Greene died and left behind him a paper which he called a "Groatsworth of Wit," in which occurred the following passage addressed to his fellow-dramatists:

> "Trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tygers heart wrapped in a players hide,' supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie."
>
> "In this invaluable ebullition of spleen" (says Mr. Grant White) "we have manifestly a satirical travesty of the line 'O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide,' in the third part of 'King Henry the Sixth'; and hence it is evident that all three parts of that series of histories were written before 1592, and that Shakespeare was known to have been more or less concerned in their composition."[1]

Both Grant White and Halliwell-Phillipps state

[1] Act I., Scene 4, White's "Shakespeare," vii. 411.

that the first part of "Henry VI." was the earliest of Shakespeare's plays.

This play was, according to Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, brought out by Lord Strange's servants on the third day of March, 1592. It had for those times an extraordinarily long run, so that Nash, *writing in or before the following* month of July, states that the performances of it had in that short interval been witnessed by "ten thousand spectators at least."[1]

From this paper of Robert Greene's we learn several things. In the first place, as Mr. Grant White says, we get a clear proof that the play of "Henry VI." had been produced before the year 1592.

The next thing we learn is that the name of Shakespeare had in some way been connected with its production—for the allusion to that name in the word "Shake-scene" is unmistakable. And lastly, the appellations of "Upstart Crow" and "Johannes Factotum," seem to suggest that this man "Shake-scene" was a conceited upstart, "beautified with our feathers," who borrowed the beauties of other writers and passed them off as his own.

Ben Jonson, who afterwards became a great friend of Shakespeare, and his eulogist, owing, it is said, to his having induced the management to accept Ben Jonson's play of "Every Man in his Humour," at first broke out in the following lines about him:

> "Poor poet ape that would be thought our chief,
> Whose works are e'en the frippery of wit,
> From brokage has become so bold a *thief*,

[1] "Outlines" (Theatrical Evidences), p. 33.

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That we the robbed have rage and pity in't.
At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
Buy the reversion of old plays; now grown
To a little wealth and credit in the scene,
He takes up all, makes each man's wit his own,
And told of this he slights it. But such crimes
The sluggish gaping auditor devours,
He marks not whose 'twas first, and after times
May judge it to be his as well as ours.
Fool! as if half-eyes will not know a fleece
From locks of wool or shreds from the whole piece:"

A more pointed attack upon him still is found in the lines from "The Return from Parnassus."

You will remember that Shakespeare had at one time made an attempt to obtain a grant from the Herald's Office, entitling his father to bear arms, the effect of which would have been to entitle his son William to the rank of esquire. Bearing this in mind, you will have no difficulty in appreciating the suggestions made in the following lines which occur in "The Return from Parnassus," which was written, I believe, in 1601, but not printed till 1605.

"Better it is 'mongst fiddlers to be chief,
Than at player's trencher beg relief;
England affords these glorious vagabonds
That carried erst their fardels on their backs,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streets,
Sooping it in their glazeing saten sutes,
And pages to attend their masterships.
With mouthing words that *better wits have framed,*
They *purchase lands*, and *now Esquires are named.*"

How much of all this was attributable to jealousy? It is difficult to say. But it is impossible not to be struck by the general terms of distrust and suspicion

in which he was spoken of by these people, and by the thinly-veiled charges that he was taking credit for work which was not his own. But what struck me more was the way in which Burbage spoke of him.

Now Burbage was the principal actor and manager in the company to which Shakespeare had attached himself, and would be more competent than any other person to form a judgement upon him.

If William Shakespeare had been recognized as a man of unusual ability by those associated with him at the theatre, Burbage, of all others, must have known it. And yet we have the statement of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps[1] to the contrary. He says:

> "The Burbages had no *conception of his intellectual supremacy*, and if they had, it is certain they would not have deviated on that account from the course they were in the habit of pursuing. In their estimation, however, he was merely, to use *their own words*, 'A DESERVING MAN,' an effective actor and a popular writer, one who would not have been considered so valuable a member of their staff had he not also worked as a practical man of business, knowing that the success of the theatre was identified with his own, and that, within certain limits, it was necessary that his art should be regulated by expediency."

How could this be? The only way of accounting for it would seem to me to be that they did not understand him to have been really the author of the plays; and there is no proof, so far as I have been able to discover, that William Shakespeare

[1] "Outlines" (Preface), p. ix.

ever put himself forward as the writer of the plays with which he furnished the theatre.

Having thus drawn your attention to the adverse opinions expressed of Shakespeare by his compeers, I will place before you what those who meant kindly towards him have said. Very little on this subject has come down to us.

First, and I have already mentioned it, there is the statement reported by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps of Burbage, whose highest encomium is expressed by the description of him as a "deserving man."

The next that I will refer to is a writer named Chettle. In December in the same year in which the "Groatsworth of Wit" was published, Chettle, who had edited it, issued his "Kind Heart's Dream," in which he apologizes for the offence given in the "Groatsworth of Wit."

> "Because myself have seen his demeanour no less *civil* than he *excellent* in the *quality he professes*, besides divers of worship have reputed his *uprightness of dealing* which *argues his honesty* and his *facetious grace in writing* which *approves his art*."

Mr. Fleay[1] in his life of Shakespeare considers that Chettle in this passage was speaking of Marlowe, and not of Shakespeare. But the Shakespeareans, apparently with good reason, have always held that Shakespeare was the person spoken of, and I will assume that it was so. It certainly was an encomium. It was kindly meant, and must have pleased Shakespeare at the time, and made some amends for the "Upstart Crow."

[1] "The Life and Work of Shakespeare," p. 111.

But beyond the words "facetious grace in writing," there is nothing in it which interests us. And are these the words in which you would expect the author of the grand Shakespeare plays to be eulogized? The charge made against him in the "Groats-worth of Wit" was not met or diminished by the things which in this publication Chettle was glad to say of him, and had but a very scanty reference to his capacity as an author. It was the language of a man who evidently wished to praise him and yet could say nothing of his splendid powers as an author, except that he had a "facetious grace in writing."

From the kind things said by Chettle, I turn to Ben Jonson's encomium. No one was better disposed to William Shakespeare than Ben Jonson had become in his latter days, and no one was more capable of appreciating the writings of Shakespeare, whatever they were. Moreover, it is an undoubted fact that he must have known the whole truth about the great plays and the hand that wrote them.

What he said, therefore, of William Shakespeare is all important. You will see when you come to study the Folio and all that was published in it, and with it, the part that Jonson played in the work, and the laudatory verses imputed to him. But in all that he said and did in connection with the Folio, there may be a question of sincerity. This all depends on the view which you may ultimately take of that publication. What I am about to refer to is the language of Ben Jonson in what are called his "Discoveries," which were published after his death,

and had been written by him under circumstances free from all suspicion of sinister motive.

The passage I allude to is as follows:

> "I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writings whatsoever he penned he never blotted line. My answer hath been 'Would he had blotted a thousand,' which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted, and to justify my own candor, for I loved the man, and do honor his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was (indeed) *honest*, and of an *open free nature*, had an *excellent phantasie, brave notions* and *gentle expressions wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stop'd.* 'Sufflamendus erat,' as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,' he replied 'Cæsar never did wrong but with just cause,' which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was *ever in him more to be praised than to be pardoned.*"

On the supposition that William Shakespeare was the author of the grand plays, the language in which he is spoken of by these contemporaries, supposing always that they recognized him as such, is somewhat disappointing.

There is so much about his honesty, and so little about his extraordinary mental gifts. I am aware that we ought to make some allowances. It is only just and reasonable to bear in mind that in his own day the plays were not appreciated as they are now.

But Jonson must have realized the rare merit of them, and yet his words "excellent phantasie," "brave notions," and "gentle expressions," are very much such as he might have used about any of the playwrights of his day.

It should be borne in mind that Ben Jonson in thus writing was actuated by no unfriendly spirit towards Shakespeare. On the contrary he expressed his very strong liking for him.

I have read this encomium several times, and it suggests several thoughts to my mind. The first thing that I should say of it is that, forming—as every one does form—my own idea of the sort of man that wrote the Shakespeare plays, I should never have thought of expressions such as Jonson has used in describing his mental capacities. I doubt very much whether any of Shakespeare's admirers of modern times would have been satisfied, or even half satisfied, with "excellent phantasie," "brave notions," and "gentle expressions." But what follows fairly puzzles me. "Wherein" (that is in the "gentle expressions") "he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was *necessary he should be stopp'd.*" What can be the meaning of this? As applied to the author of the plays I cannot imagine its being "*necessary*" to stop him.

To what then could he have been alluding? A possible explanation occurs to me upon the supposition that William Shakespeare was the sort of man which the plaintiffs would represent him to have been. I shall best tell you what I mean by quoting the description that Mr. Appleton Morgan in his

very clever and amusing book called "The Myth," gives of him.

He says he was described as "an easy-going rural wag,—a funny fellow,—a natural wit,—a wag in the crude, but he wanted art."[1] And he quotes as authorities, Aubrey, Cartwright, Digges, Denham, and Fuller.

Now if this was the sort of man which William Shakespeare was, and if—as is said—he used to have "wit-combats" with Ben Jonson at the "Mermaid" or elsewhere, it may be that what is called in these degenerate times "chaff" was often bandied to and fro very freely between them, and that it might well happen that Shakespeare at times went a little too far—perhaps in personalities or in otherwise unseemly talk—and it was necessary to stop him. But on the assumption that Jonson was speaking of him as the man who had given to the world the immortal plays, the suggestion that at times it was necessary he should be stopped is beyond one's comprehension.

It may well be, therefore, that this written portrait of William Shakespeare by his friend and boon companion Ben Jonson may have some effect on your minds in determining which of the two Shakespeares it was of whom Ben Jonson was the familiar companion, and of whom he was thinking and talking when he spoke of its being necessary to stop him. Was it the greatly gifted writer of the plays—he who had "done that in our language which exceeded Greece or Rome"; or was it the

[1] "Shakespeare Myth," p. 303.

"easy-going rural wag," the "natural wit," the "funny fellow," as represented by the plaintiffs? A great deal I think turns upon this.

I am now about to refer to a publication which has been the subject of much comment, and which, in one aspect, goes far to establish the proposition for which some of the Baconians have always contended.

I allude to those who have asserted that some at least of the Shakespeare Plays had been on the stage before William Shakespeare ever set his foot in London.

This is a matter essentially depending on dates. I invite your particular attention, therefore, to the date of the publication to which I have been alluding.

In the year 1587, according to Mr. Dyce, who is, I believe, a high authority, but at any rate in the year 1589, a man named Thomas Nash wrote an Epistle which was published and prefixed to Greene's "Menaphon," and in which the following passage is to be found:

> "It is a common practice *now-a-days*, amongst a sort of shifting companions that run through every art and thrive at none to leave the trade of 'Noverint' *whereto they were born* and busy themselves with the endeavours of art that could scarcely Latinise their neck-verse if they should have need. Yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as 'blood is a beggar' and so forth, and if you entreat him fair *in a frosty morning* he will afford you whole 'Hamlets,' I should say hand-fulls of tragical speeches."

This Epistle has been relied upon by the Shake-

spearians as a proof of Shakespeare's connection with the play of "Hamlet." It is difficult to perceive why. He is not mentioned either directly or by inference. Indeed he is excluded, for it could not be said of him that he had "left the trade of a lawyer whereto he was born."

Here is Mr. Grant White's opinion:

> "It has been most unaccountably assumed," says he, "that the passage in Nash's Epistle refers to Shakespeare. That Shakespeare had written this tragedy ('Hamlet') in 1586, when he was but twenty-two years old, is improbable to the verge of possibility."[1]

It seems to me that Nash's meaning was plain enough. He meant to suggest that the play of "Hamlet" was written by some lawyer, though it did not profess to be so.

It was natural enough that Nash and Greene and others should have resented the practice, which we are told had become common, for young barristers to obtain some profit by writing for the stage.

The Epistle, if it proved anything, was thus strong evidence for Bacon, as it seems to me, who was not only a lawyer but born to the profession of the law. Shakespeare not having been so born, and certainly not having "left the trade" of a lawyer, could not have been intended. Indeed, the whole point of the complaint seems to lie in this, that those who were born to be lawyers and had practised that trade had deserted their profession to interfere with his.

[1] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 71.

But Nash's Epistle has, I think, a far more important bearing upon the general question. It gives us a *positive date*, which, if correct, would go far, I think, to make the authorship of Shakespeare, as far as "Hamlet" is concerned, impossible. The date of this Epistle it seems was, if not 1587, at any rate 1589, and shows that the play of "Hamlet" had been played *before that date*; and this year of 1587 was the time of Shakespeare's arrival in London.

You must, however, bear in mind that the defendants meet this by asserting that there was some *other* and *earlier* play of that name than the "Hamlet" we speak of. It may be so; but the allusion to the "frosty morning" brings before us rather vividly the ghost scene with the "nipping and eager air" of the Shakespeare play. Now, if the "whole Hamlets" of which Nash speaks were intended as an allusion to the Shakespeare play of "Hamlet" with which we are conversant, the date of this Epistle of his is certainly a very important one. Mr. Dyce says it (the Epistle) was published in 1587, and the year 1587 (some say the year 1586) was the year in which young Shakespeare came to London—illiterate, unlearned, and devoid of mental culture. To have written any of the Shakespeare plays, at the age of twenty-two, and in the state of ignorance which must have characterized him when he came to London, would surely have been impossible? There are abundant evidences of profound study in that play. A very remarkable one is found in the scene between the two clowns and the unmis-

takable allusion to the legal arguments in the cause of Hales and Pettit, to be found in the reports of Plowden, which I have just brought to your notice at large.[1] Had he then at once on arriving in London given himself up to the study of the Law and the reading of black-letter Law Reports? . . .

It may be worth while to pause still a little longer over this paper of Nash's, on account of the certainty which it offers us within certain limits in the matter of dates. The date to be sure is not absolutely fixed, but it is so within two years.

It was published in 1587, says Mr. Dyce, and at any rate it had been made public by 1589. And it referred to "Hamlet." The "Hamlet" so referred to had then been acted in or before 1589. I will assume for the moment that the play of "Hamlet" referred to was the play with which we are familiar. Upon that assumption, is it possible that Shakespeare could have written the play? This is a most serious question, for it goes to the root of the matter in dispute.

Mr. Grant White, as I have just reminded you, states that it is "almost impossible that William Shakespeare had written this play in the year 1586, when he was only twenty-two years old;"—(thus treating the year 1586 as the period about which the Epistle was written). He therefore suggests that this reference of Nash's to a play of "Hamlet" should be understood as intended to apply to an *earlier* play of that name. On referring to the introduction to the play of "Hamlet," written by Mr.

[1] See page 90.

Grant White in his edition of the Shakespeare Plays,[1] it is clear that this was his opinion. For he there says:

> "We have evidence that before 1587 an English play founded on the story of Hamlet was well-known in London. A very striking incident in this old tragedy was the incitements of young Hamlet to revenge by the ghost of his father. In this earlier play the crying out of 'Revenge' by the ghost and by Hamlet was so impressive that that exclamation became associated with Hamlet's name, and was almost a bye-word."

That there was such an old play is admitted by Judge Holmes,[2] who has written so ably in opposition to the authorship of Shakespeare.

So that, I think, you may be safe in taking it that there was an old play of that kind. But it is a question, and a serious one, whether Nash's Epistle can be so interpreted as to make it even possible that he meant to refer to this old play, and it is well worth while to dwell upon it a short time and think it out.

The general purport and intention of Nash's paper cannot be doubted. It may not unfairly, I think, be paraphrased thus:

"There is in the present day a set of men who desert their legal profession to which they were born, to occupy themselves in writing plays, and thereby encroach upon us. They get their clever thoughts and sayings from the English translation

[1] "Riverside Shakespeare" (Introduction to "Hamlet").

[2] "The Authorship of Shakespeare" (Judge Holmes), pp. 34-36.

of Seneca; and one of them wrote a play called 'Hamlet,' and consulting Seneca on a 'frosty morning,' borrowed from him the handfuls of tragical speeches to be there found." The "frosty morning" is of course nonsense, and not meant seriously. It is probably an allusion to the 4th Scene, 1st Act of Shakespeare's play, where Hamlet is described as going forth on a frosty morning to encounter the ghost. This "frosty morning," therefore, is appropriate enough as an allusion to the Shakespeare play, and perhaps you may think that it goes far towards identifying the Shakespeare play as the play which Nash alluded to. Whether it would also be appropriate to the old play we cannot tell.

But let us further consider this suggestion that Nash was referring to an old play.

Nash's Epistle divides itself into two parts. In the first part he is complaining that "*now-a-days*" a class of men had taken, as a common practice, to writing for the stage who were born and bred as lawyers. In the subsequent part he sneeringly alludes to a translation of Seneca as the source of their inspiration and tragical speeches, and then he instances the play of "Hamlet."

It is difficult to imagine that the author whom he was describing as plagiarizing from Seneca, in the play of "Hamlet," was any other than one of the class referred to in the previous part, whose practice it was *now-a-days* to desert the law for the drama.

A sneer at a class of men whom he thought were unfairly trespassing upon ground already occupied by himself and other playwrights was intelligible

enough; but there would be no sense in running down the author of some old play. The Epistle throughout can hardly be understood except as a protest against some *then current practice.* To read it as a hostile criticism upon an *old* play appears to me to rob it of all point and meaning.

It seems to me impossible, therefore, to disconnect this sneer at the author of a play called "Hamlet," from all that had gone before. What sense or object would there be in depreciating the nameless author of some old play, by suggesting that he had stolen his tragical speeches from an English translation of Seneca? Those who have too readily accepted this solution of the difficulty in believing that the youthful Shakespeare could have written the play alluded to by Nash, have overlooked, I fear, the word "now-a-days."

It is a most important point for you to consider and form your own opinion upon. If Nash's reference was to the Shakespeare play it seems pretty clear that William Shakespeare did not write it.

First, because (as Mr. Grant White says) such a play could not have been written by a young man of twenty-two; and secondly, because, independent of his youth, the deficient state of his knowledge and learning within a year or two of his first arrival in London would render such authorship impossible.[1]

This would be a very short cut to a conclusion upon the question you have to try, at least as far as Shakespeare's authorship in concerned. And his

[1] Grant White's "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 71.

name once removed from the controversy, there will not, I think, be much question as to the lawyer to whose pen the Shakespeare plays are to be attributed.

For many minds a proof of this kind has a great attraction. For others, and of these I confess myself one, a broader and more extended basis on which to rest a conclusion is more acceptable. The difficulty of imagining this young man to have converted himself in a few years from a state bordering on ignorance into a deeply read student; master of French and Italian as well as of Greek and Latin, and capable of quoting and borrowing largely from writers in all these languages, is almost insuperable.

But before parting with the play of "Hamlet," I ought to recall to your memories what facts are known to us as to the time of its production and the dates of its publication, together with its first association with the name of Shakespeare.

There is no record of its first production on the stage. But it is said to have been acted in London and the two universities.

The first occasion on which the play was *printed* and *published* was in 1603, and, so far as appears, this was also the first occasion upon which the authorship was attributed to William Shakespeare. In the next year the play was reprinted and published again.

I ought to tell you what the title-pages said.

Of the publication in 1603 the substance of the title-page was as follows:

"The Tragical Historie of Hamlet,

"by William Shakespeare,

"as it has been diverse times acted by His Highness's servants in the Cittie of London, as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere.

"Printed for N. L. and John Trundell."

Of the second publication in 1604:

"The Tragical Historie of Hamlet,

"by William Shakespeare.

"Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again, as it was according to the true and perfect coppie.

"Printed by I. R. for N. L., and are to be sold at his Shoppe under St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street."

Although we know from Nash's Epistle (assuming that it was the play to which he referred) that it had been made public in some form before 1589, it had never been printed and published until 1603.

Both publications are said to be printed for N. L., who it appears kept a "shoppe under St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street"—and both are said to be "By William Shakespeare."

But William Shakespeare is in no way shown to be connected with its publication, or with its entry at the Stationers' Hall.

I am now about to refer to a very different subject, which is certainly not without weight in the inquiry in which we are engaged.

Mr. Smith, to whom I have referred before, has drawn attention to the accuracy of detail which is shown in the plays where foreign places and customs are concerned.

He says :

> "The most striking difficulty, perhaps, in believing that William Shakespeare wrote the plays lies in the descriptions of foreign scenes, particularly of Italian scenes and of sea-life, interwoven in the text of the plays: descriptions so numerous and so marvellously accurate, that it is almost impossible to believe they were written by a man who lived in London and Stratford, who never left this island, and who saw the world only from the stroller's booth."[1]

This subject attracted the attention of many Shakespearean readers, and attempts have been made from time to time to show that William Shakespeare did at some time in his career undertake foreign travel. There is not the slightest testimony in support of this suggestion, and, like that of his having once been a lawyer's clerk, it seems to have been generated very much after this fashion : The man who wrote the plays must have been in those countries which he portrays. William Shakespeare wrote the plays, consequently he must have been there.

The Baconians use this matter as a strong argument for Bacon, as he is known to have been for some time in Italy.

A learned German, Dr. Elze, who has devoted much time and labour to the study of the Shakespeare plays, and has written several essays on the subject, says :[2]

[1] W. H. Smith, "Bacon and Shakespeare," p. 92.

[2] "Essays on Shakespeare" (Karl Elze), p. 262.

"The manner in which Petruchio is betrothed to Katherine by her father uniting their hands before two witnesses, is essentially an Italian custom.

"In regard to the household furniture and the objects of luxury with which old Gremio's house is furnished, it has been remarked before by Lady Morgan that all the articles mentioned have been actually seen by her in the palaces of Venice, Genoa, and Florence.

* * * * * *

"Even the circumstance of old Gobbo presenting a dish of doves to his son's master betrays a characteristic Italian feature."

All these matters, tending as they do to show that the writer of the plays had been himself in the countries in which the plots of his plays were laid, are urged strongly by the plaintiffs as carrying the double inference that the Stratford young man—whose daily work tied him to England—could not have been the author, and that the incidents of Bacon's life were just such as the author's might have been.

This state of things is dilated upon by Mr. Appleton Morgan,[1] if I recollect right, in a passage to the following effect:

"It is only the careful student of these plays who knows or conceives either their wealth of exact reference to the minutest features of the lands or the localities in which their actions lie, or the conclusions to be drawn therefrom. There were no guide-books or itineraries of Venice published until after Shakespeare's time, and yet while schoolboy facts such as that Venice is built in the sea and gondolas take the place of wheeled vehicles, or that there is a leaning tower at Pisa, or a Coliseum at

[1] The "Shakespearean Myth," p. 219.

Verona or Rome, are not referred to, the outdoor action in 'Othello' or 'The Merchant of Venice' is always in a street or open place, canals and gondolas being never mentioned.

* * * * * *

"For instance, Portia sends her servant Balthazar to fetch notes and garments of her learned cousin Bellario and to meet her 'at the common ferry which trades to Venice.' Othello brings Desdemona from her father's house to his residence 'in the Sagittary.'"

In "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Valentine is made to embark at Verona for Milan, and in "Taming of the Shrew" Baptista is the name of a man. These were sneered at as mistakes for some hundred years, until one learned German discovered that "Baptista is not uncommonly used as a man's name in Italy,"[1] and another learned German, that in the sixteenth century Upper Italy was intersected by canals, a fact which Shakespeare must have been aware of had he visited the country.[2]

It is surely very much to be regretted that so very little is in existence in the shape of correspondence or memoirs, or other contemporary writings, which would serve to furnish us with materials for estimating the general character of William Shakespeare, and provide us with an estimate of the sort of man that he was.

Of his own actual handwriting there is absolutely nothing but five signatures, three of which are to his Will. And in the writings of others there are only two or three letters referring to him, which are all about the borrowing of money from him.

[1] "Allgemeine Zeitung," October 21st, 1870.

[2] "Essays on Shakespeare" (Karl Elze), p. 296.

The widely opposite characters which the parties in controversy here assign to him make the inquirer long for some facts or incidents which will exhibit him in one light or another with greater distinctness.

In his Stratford life such incidents are not wanting, and the pictures they present tend strongly to support the views of his character taken by the Baconians. But he was little better than a boy when his Stratford life came to an abrupt end. Of his life after that period I cannot call to mind that there have been placed before us any incidents or events connected with him, except a traditionary story of his having outwitted a fellow actor in a certain amorous intrigue, and his supposed paternity of Sir William Davenant—in respect of which, but for the indecent avowals of Sir William himself, there does not seem to be a particle of reliable evidence.

In this dearth of more substantive materials for the formation of a judgement concerning him, it would not be right to pass over the short poetic effusions which on different subjects have been imputed to him personally, and which are connected, all of them I think, with the Stratford life—I mean the second Stratford life after his retirement.

Epitaph on Elias James.—From a manuscript volume of poems by Herrick and others, said to be in writing of Charles I., in Bodleian Library:

> "When God was pleased, the world unwilling yet,
> Elias James to nature paid his debt,
> And here reposeth—as he lived he dyed,
> The saying in him strongly verified.

Such life—such death—then the known truth to tell,
He lived a godly lyfe and dyde as well."

On Sir Thomas Stanley.—On authority of Sir William Dugdale (Visitation Book), who says "The following verses were made by William Shakespeare the late famous tragedian":

"Ask who lies here, but do not weepe,
He is not dead, he doth but sleepe;
This stony register is for his bones,
His fame is more perpetual than these stones,
And his own goodness with himself being gone
Shall live when earthly monument is none.
Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name:
The memory of him for whom this stands
Shall outlive marble and defacer's hands;
When all to time's consumption shall be given,
Stanley for whom this stands shall stand in Heaven."

Epitaph on Tom-a-Combe, otherwise Thin-beard. On authority of Peck, "Memoirs of Milton":—

"Thin in beard and thick in purse,
Never man beloved worse;
He went to the grave with many a curse,
The Devil and he had both one nurse."

Whom I have Drunken with.

"Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hillborough and hungry Grafton,
With dodging Exhall, Papist Wixford,
Beggarly Broom and drunken Bidford."

These lines attributed to Shakespeare by John Jordon.

The Epitaph of John Combe, written by Shakespeare during Combe's life, who asked him to write

one. It comes from the Ashmolean MSS. cited by Halliwell:

"Ten in a hundred here lies engraved,
'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not saved;
If any any one asks, Who lies in this tomb?
Ho, ho, quoth the Devil—'tis my John a Combe."

Combe, who lived at Stratford, afterwards died, and left much money to the poor.

So Shakespeare wrote the following as his epitaph:

"How'ere he lived judge not,
John Combe shall never be forgot
While poor hath memory, for he did gather
To make the poor his issue, he their father,
As record of his tilth and seedes,
Did crown him in his later needes.
Finis—W. Shak."

"Goliath comes with sword and spear,
And David with a sling;
Although Goliath rage and swear,
Down David doth him bring."

On the authority of Stratford local tradition.

But perhaps the best authenticated poetical effort that has come down to us is the Epitaph which William Shakespeare prepared for himself.

A Mr. Dowdall in a letter, which still exists, to Edward Southwell, dated April 10th, 1692, says that the following lines were written by Shakespeare for himself a little before his death:

"Good friend, for Jesus sake forbeare
To digg the dust encloased heare:
Bleste be ye man that spares thes stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."

And, lastly, there are the lines which I have already quoted to you, and which are said to have been the cause of his flight to London.

"A parliament man and a Justice of Peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass;
If lousie is Lucy as some volkes miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousie whatever befall it.
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass is his state,
We allow by his ears with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lousie as some volkes miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousie whatever befall it."

The bearing of this poetry of William Shakespeare's upon the question which is before us is not perhaps very direct, but considering them as really the handiwork of Shakespeare, one can hardly deny that they help us to form some idea of the sort of man that he was, and perhaps to throw some light on the question of what he was not.

Now I will ask you whether there is not a general character pervading all these separate efforts?

The Epitaphs strike me as if they were the familiar poetry of the English churchyard; his own epitaph particularly so.

The question is, Could Shakespeare—the Shakespeare of the immortal plays—could he have condescended to them, or to anything like them?

I have more than once in addressing you referred to the two Shakespeares: the rural wag—the natural wit—the funny fellow—the hero of the wit-combats—as represented by the Plaintiffs, or the great philosophic dramatist represented by the Defendants. Well, what do you say of this poetry? With which

Shakespeare can you most easily and naturally associate it?

I do not know that the dates when particular plays were produced have any very notable bearing on their authorship, but a general idea of the period of time within which many of the best plays were made public may not be without interest for us. And it is not unnatural that we should desire to carry in our minds a general view of the time when the greater part of the plays were given to the public in connection with what we know of the whereabouts of Shakespeare and the way in which he was employed. I wish I could give you something like positive dates for the production of these plays; but the materials laid before us do not furnish positive dates, and we can only deal with what materials we have.

You will remember that according to Mr. Knight and Mr. Staunton, no less than six of the Shakespeare plays had been written before 1591. Starting then from that year 1591, we have the following statement:

> "Between the winter of 1591-2 and the summer of 1598, Shakespeare had written at least fifteen plays. The plays were not popular during his life, and were not played at the people's playhouse until the re-building of the Globe Theatre in 1614, and they were always called Shakespeare's Plays till the year 1700."

This is the statement of Mr. W. H. Smith, whose name is well known as being among the first of those who published their doubts as to the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays. He speaks, you see, of the summer of 1598. It so happens that

there was a book called "Palladis Tamia," by Francis Meres, Master of Arts, published in 1598.

It spoke much in praise of Shakespeare's plays, and it gave the following list of his plays as being then known to the public:

"Two Gentlemen of Verona."
"The Comedy of Errors."
"Love's Labour Lost."
"All's Well that Ends Well."
"King John."
"The Merchant of Venice."
"The Midsummer Night's Dream."
"Henry IV."
"Richard II."
"Richard III."
"Titus Andronicus."
"Romeo and Juliet."

He did not speak as having any personal knowledge of the man William Shakespeare, but he spoke of him, as we should at the present day, as the writer of the plays commonly known by that name.

This list is important as showing that these plays had been by that time made public.

Between 1598 and 1604, the following of the plays were made public, and three out of four printed:

"The first and second parts of Henry IV."	1598.
"Much Ado about Nothing," 1st quarto	1600.
"Twelfth Night," in Manningham's Diary	1601.
"Henry V.," 1st quarto	1600.

Carrying on the dates from 1604, we have the following statement by Judge Holmes:[1]

[1] Judge Holmes, "The Authorship of Shakespeare," p. 6 (Houghton Mifflin and Co., New York, 1886).

"From 1604 till 1613 the personal notices that remain to us exhibit him as being always very attentive to matters of business, rapidly growing in estate, purchasing farms, houses and tithes in Stratford, bringing suits for small sums against various persons for malt delivered, money loaned and the like, carrying on agricultural pursuits and other kinds of traffic, with 'a good grip o' the siller,' and executing business commissions in London for his Stratford neighbours, while we are to suppose he was at the same time producing such plays as 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' 'Lear,' and 'Julius Cæsar,' from all which it was plain he had an excellent capacity for business; but there is nowhere the slightest note or trace of his literary occupations."

This carries us on up to 1613, but the opinion of many is that he had practically retired to Stratford long before, and Mr. Staunton, whose published edition of the Shakespeare Plays is so well known, puts his retirement as early as 1604.

The statements of Mr. Halliwell in his Biography of Shakespeare tend strongly to the conclusion that he retired in 1604.

He says:[1]

"The exact period at which Shakespeare retired from the stage is not known, but he was one of the original actors in Ben Jonson's 'Sejanus' in 1603, and in a letter supposed to have been written in 1608 he is described as 'till of late an actor of good account in the companie.' His name also occurs in a list of the King's company appended to a letter dated April 9th, 1604."

It is evident from the action brought by him against Philip Rogers for malt sold to him in 1604,

[1] "Life of W. Shakespeare" (James Halliwell), p. 218.

that Shakespeare was occupied in very different pursuits in that year from the work of an actor.

> "I am inclined to believe (says Mr. Halliwell) that any abode Shakespeare occupied in London after 1597 was merely for his temporary convenience. A curious manuscript list formed during a period when there was a scarcity of grain . . . mentions Shakespeare as holding in Stratford ten quarters; and this list is further of importance because it exhibits him as residing in Chapel-street Ward, which is where New Place was situated."[1]

Before considering his final retirement there are one or two independent matters of much interest which I ought not to omit to notice.

There is a passage in the well-known work called "Fuller's Worthies" which is much relied upon by the Shakespeareans.

I will read to you all that is material to our present purpose.

After remarking that Shakespeare was an eminent instance of the truth of the rule that "*Poeta nascitur non fit*," he says:

> "Many were the wit-combates that I beheld betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

It is asserted by some that what Fuller said was "wet," and not "wit" combats, but the context, I think, makes this unlikely.

[1] "Life of W. Shakespeare" (James Halliwell), p. 166.

A much more important criticism of the passage is that Fuller was only eight years old when Shakespeare died, in 1616; and it is hardly to be believed that a boy of that tender age was present at these convivial meetings, and that not once, but many times. This impeaches Fuller's authority; but if unimpeached, I am at a loss rather to know what it is supposed to prove in this controversy.

After quoting this passage from Fuller Mr. Halliwell in his biography says:-

> "Some of these wit-combats have been handed down to posterity. The following specimen is preserved in the Ashmolean MSS. at Oxford.
>
> "Mr. Ben Jonson and Mr. William Shakespeare being merrie at a tavern, Mr. Jonson having begune this for his epitaph:
>
> "'Here lies Ben Jonson that was once one;' he gives it to Mr. Shakespeare to make up, who presently writes:
>
> "'Who while he lived was a sloe thing,
> And now being dead is nothinge.'"[1]

In 1609 there appeared in London (says Mr. Morgan) an anonymous publication—a play entitled "Troilus and Cressida."

> "It was accompanied by a preface addressed 'A never writer to an ever reader,' which in the turgid fashion of the day it set forth the merits and attractions of the play itself. Among its other claims to public favour this preface asserted that the play was one 'never staled with the stage, never claper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar,'—which seems to mean that it had never been performed in a theatre. . . . However that may

[1] "Life of W. Shakespeare," p. 186.

be, it is a fact that a second edition of this play (printed from the same type, but *without the preface*) appeared with a title-page announcing that this is the play of 'Troilus and Cressida,' as it was enacted by His Majesty's servants at the Globe, to which was added 'written by William Shakespeare.'"[1]

Was William Shakespeare, then, the "never writer," and was it he who vaunted as the great merit of his new play, that it had never been soiled and degraded by having been acted upon the stage? It does not seem likely.

Or, was it that—like so many other plays at that day—the play had appeared anonymously, and when subsequently printed and published was declared by the printers to be written by the person, whoever he might be, whose name best enabled them to sell them?

You must form your own conclusions as to the meaning and explanation of this singular incident in the history of plays "written by William Shakespeare."

But the play itself has another and a very curious interest for us, for it contains a passage referring to Aristotle, in which the writer quotes Aristotle as saying that young men are unfit to hear moral philosophy:

> "Not much
> Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
> Unfit to hear moral philosophy."

This was a mistake, for Aristotle never said any such thing. What Aristotle spoke of was political, not moral, philosophy.

[1] "The Shakespeare Myth," p. 285.

And now comes the remarkable fact that Bacon, in his "Advancement of Learning," quotes Aristotle on this same subject, and in doing so makes identically the same mistake. I will read you the two passages—that in Bacon's work and that in the play—and you shall judge for yourselves how far they correspond and are obviously the work of the same hand.

The passage in the plays occurs in Act II., Scene 2, and is as follows:

"*Hector.* Paris, and Troilus, you have both said well;
And on the cause and question now in hand
Have gloz'd,—but superficially; *not much*
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.
The reasons you allege do more conduce
To the *hot passion* of *distemper'd blood*,"
etc., etc.

The passage in Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" is as follows:

Treating of moral culture, Bacon quotes Aristotle as saying:

> "That young men are no fit auditors of moral philosophy," because "they are not settled from the boiling heat of their affections nor attempered with time and experience."

The "Advancement" was published in the year 1605.

The play appears to have been a new play in 1608. The author of the play, therefore, might have seen the passage in the "Advancement."

What conclusion is to be drawn from this very singular coincidence it will be for you to say. Is it

possible that Bacon wrote this play of "Troilus and Cressida" quite independent of the general question whether he was the author of the other Shakespearean plays? The play seems to stand on a somewhat different footing from the rest, in its preface and the circumstances of its appearance. Moreover, when you read the play you will find that it runs on very high ground, and is more like what one would expect from Bacon than many others of these plays. There is also another curious fact, but a very small one. The play is not found in the *index* of the Folio of 1623, although it is included in the Folio itself, and it appears from the notation of the pages as if it had been inserted at the last moment.

All these matters afford ample ground for all sorts of conjectures, but I cannot say that I think they positively prove anything; but that is for you to determine.

The portrait of Shakespeare which appeared in the Folio of 1623 has been the subject of many observations and contentions. I forbear to say a word on my own behalf as to the impression which it makes upon me as a likeness of the author of the plays, except this, that it certainly is a remarkable one. I am not aware that the evidence before us offers any expressions of opinion by those who take either side in this controversy as to the effect this remarkable portrait has produced upon them. There are four or five other *supposed* portraits of him, but I have observed that while some of Shakespeare's admirers and advocates adhere to one portrait, and others to another, I have not met with any statement

by any of them that they are satisfied with this one, which, after all, is the only portrait which has the slightest claim to a proved authenticity. I cannot think how any admirer of Shakespeare and believer in his authorship can be justified in thus abandoning (they do not say why) the representation of their idolized author which was given to the world by the two publishers—Heminge and Condell—the very men upon whose word for veracity they have to rely so entirely for the authorship of the plays. But there is another consideration which goes far to constitute an absolute proof that the portrait was genuine, and at least a tolerable likeness. For how could these two men have dared to place under the eyes of the theatrical public, among whom hundreds must have been found who knew and remembered William Shakespeare perfectly well, any portrait which was not in its general features at least a fair likeness of him? He had died only seven years before. And indeed what natural or reasonable object could they have had in so doing? The original picture was painted as a portrait of Shakespeare, we are told, by one Martin Droeshout, and the print which appeared in the Folio was engraved from it.

On this Mr. Appleton Morgan remarks:

> "Ben Jonson might know little about art, and care little about the resemblances, and have been satisfied with the recollection that the original picture was a faithful resemblance, and that no doubt the engraver had achieved all that his art could perform."[1]

I do not trouble you with the accounts which

[1] "The Shakespeare Myth" (Appleton Morgan), p. 95.

have been given of the four or five other pictures or busts, which from time to time have been discovered in different places, and supposed on somewhat slender evidence to have been meant to represent William Shakespeare—no two of which are at all alike.

It is not easy to assign a reason for the readiness with which these portraits have been welcomed by his admirers, unless it be that while the portrait painted by Droeshout may have been a fair or even a good likeness of William Shakespeare, it was hard to digest as the likeness of the man who could have written the Shakespeare Plays."

A matter which is held by Shakespeareans to be true, and to redound greatly to the credit of Shakespeare, must be alluded to here. I allude to the supposed intimacy of the dramatist with Lord Southampton.

I have not been able to find the slightest proof that they ever saw one another, save at the theatre. I will refer to what has become known to us. The poem of "Venus and Adonis" was dedicated to Lord Southampton by the author signing himself William Shakespeare; but I am not aware of any evidence to show whether the nobleman accepted or appreciated the compliment. Independent of this fact of the dedication, there is nothing to connect the two men, I believe, except the story repeated by Rowe, of Southampton having given Shakespeare £1,000. Rowe goes on to explain whence he got this story and why he gave credence to it, and when you are in possession of what he says you will be able to form an opinion of the value

to be attached to an account so void of all credibility in itself.

Rowe published his biography of Shakespeare in the year 1707, and in it there occurs the following passage as to the gift supposed to have been made by Lord Southampton to our dramatist:

> "There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of William Shakespeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was perfectly well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him £1000 to enable him to make a purchase he had a mind to."

According, therefore, to this statement of Rowe's, the authority for this incredible story is shifted from his own shoulders to those of Sir William Davenant, who, he says, was perfectly well acquainted with Shakespeare's affairs.

This, then, is the way in which the story is built up. Somebody (we do not know who) assured Rowe that the story was "handed down" by Sir William Davenant, and because he (Sir William Davenant) was well acquainted with Shakespeare's affairs, Rowe gave credence to it.

You will naturally wonder why Sir William Davenant was said to be so acquainted. He was in no way connected with the poet or his family; he certainly was not named in his will, nor has any suggestion even been made that he ever set foot in Stratford, or was treated by Shakespeare with any affection or regard. And your wonder will hardly be diminished when I tell you that the whole story

of a connection between them rests, so far as I can see, upon a scandalous rumour (which no doubt existed) that the actor, who was in the habit of staying at the "Crown Inn" at Oxford, kept by Davenant's father, carried on an intrigue with Mrs. Davenant, of which Sir William was the offspring. It may be pointed out at once that there is not the slightest evidence offered in support of this story, but it is, I regret to say, quite true that Sir William, far from repudiating his mother's want of chastity, seems rather, in his convivial moments at, least, to have gloried in the scandalous imputation.

Let us suppose then that it was true. Does that lead to any fair or reasonable conclusion that he must have been perfectly well acquainted with his father's affairs? Other reason for supposing it there is none. Shakespeare, after 1604, as I have shown you, retired to Stratford, where he lived till he died in 1616. Sir William Davenant was born in 1605, and up to 1616, a period of eleven years, lived presumably at Oxford with his parents. It is not pretended on the faith of any rumour or tradition that has come down to us, that this little illegitimate boy was ever taken notice of by Shakespeare, or indeed ever saw him. And as to having any knowledge of his pecuniary affairs, his tender age, not exceeding eleven years at Shakespeare's death, renders such an idea well-nigh ridiculous. I have called the whole story incredible, and when your attention is directed to the real value of £1,000 in those days, I think you will say it is incredible also. According to Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, and I think the same

thing is said by Lord Macaulay and Mr. Froude, £1,000 in the days of King James would represent a sum of no less than £10,000 to £12,000.

We are thus brought to the time of his final retirement—a period which is full of interest and information for us.

Indeed, I doubt whether anything which has come down to us is so instructive and sheds back so strong a light upon the true character of his career, as his conduct and the sort of life he led when he had quitted all connection with the stage.

Mr. Grant White fixes the date of Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford as late as 1611. He says:[1]

> "We are as ignorant, upon direct evidence, of the exact date at which Shakespeare at last withdrew from London to live at ease at Stratford as we are of that at which he fled from Stratford to enter upon a life of irksome toil in London. But all the circumstances which bear upon this question *point to some time in the year* 1611."

Mr. White does not tell us what the considerations were which induced him to fix this date so late as the year 1611. But I think it not improbable that the production of such plays as "Macbeth" in 1610, "King Lear" in 1607, and "Troilus and Cressida" in 1609, which he assumed to have been written by Shakespeare, may have had something to do with it.

Mr. Lee, in the latest biography of Shakespeare also fixes 1611 as the date of Shakespeare's final

[1] "Life and Genius," p. 164.

retirement, and perhaps for the same reasons as Mr. Grant White.

Mr. Staunton, as I have already told you, fixes the retirement at 1604,[1] which appears to me to be the most probable date. For it is very difficult to believe that Shakespeare continued to live in London after he had quitted the stage; and, as Mr. Halliwell points out, he was selling malt to one Rogers in Stratford in the year 1604.[2]

But while there is this doubt and discrepancy between the accounts given of the exact date of his final retirement to his native town, the general accounts of the life he led there and the way in which he occupied his time are pretty uniform.

We do not know a great deal of these last five or six years of his life, it is true, but there is this to be said, that all that we do know points in one and the same direction. Here is the account of Mr. Knight:

> "He returns wealthy and honoured to the bosom of those who are dearest to him, his wife and daughters, his mother, sisters and brothers. The companions of his youth are all about him. He has constantly kept up his intercourse with them. He is come to walk amidst his own fields, to till them and sell the produce. His labour will be his recreation. In the activity of his body will this energy of his intellect find rest."[3]
>
> * * * * * *
>
> "He still carried forward his ruling purpose of the

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[1] Staunton's "Shakespeare," p. xxxvii.

[2] Halliwell's "Life of Shakespeare," p. 208.

[3] Knight's "Biography," p. 287.

acquisition of property in Stratford." In 1605, in the month of July, "he bought a moiety of a lease of the great and small tithes of Stratford for the remainder of the term of 92 years, and the amount of the purchase was £445."

"Before the date of this purchase it is perfectly clear that he exercised the trading part of a farmer's business."[1]

The dates which Mr. Knight here gives us are important, and, unlike so many of the dates which we have to deal with in Shakespeare's life, are well ascertained and vouched.

On the 24th of July, 1605, he buys a lease of the tithes of Stratford for the end of a term of ninety-two years. And then Mr. Knight adds, that before this date of July, 1605, there is no doubt that he exercised the trading part of a farmer's business.

Meanwhile, we are to suppose, he was producing such plays as "Macbeth," "Othello," "Lear," and "Julius Cæsar," "Antony and Cleopatra."[2]

And going still farther back, there is an account in existence of a large quantity of malt in his hands in 1597.[3] This was only ten years after his arrival in London. Other transactions, the date of which is vouched by public records, show him to have been dealing with people in Stratford, and to be lending a sum of no less than £30 to one Richard Quiney at Stratford in the year 1598. And in the year 1604 we have positive proof of his supplying Philip

[1] Knight's "Biography," p. 282.

[2] "The Authorship of Shakespeare" (Judge Holmes), vol. ., p. 6.

[3] "Biography" (C. Knight), p. 282.

Rogers with malt at various dates between the months of March and May in that year.[1]

From all these matters it rather looks as if Shakespeare was by no means settled exclusively in London. On the contrary, he seems to have kept up his communications with his native town pretty constantly, and to have been pretty active in increasing his income by dealing in farming produce there, as well as some money transactions. Indeed when he came finally to drop his connection with the stage it was not apparently for the purpose of indulging his mind and genius by a life of learned leisure, but only to pursue his farming avocations, and do justice to his investments in the land about Stratford.

Mr. Grant White, remarking upon the sort of people among whom he lived, and on the absence of all correspondence with the great men of his day, says:

> "Unlike Dante, unlike Milton, unlike Goethe, unlike the great poets and tragedians of Greece and Rome, Shakespeare left no trace upon the political or even the social life of his era. Of his eminent countrymen, Raleigh, Sidney, Spenser, Bacon, Cecil, Walsingham, Coke, Camden, Hooker, Drake, Hobbes, Inigo Jones, Herbert of Cherbury, Laud, Pym, Hampden, Selden, Walton, Wotton, and Donne may be properly reckoned as his contemporaries, and yet there is no proof whatever that he was personally known to either of these men, or to any others of less note among the statesmen, scholars, soldiers and artists of his day, except the few of his fellow-craftsmen whose acquaintance with him has been heretofore mentioned."[2]

[1] "Biography," (C. Knight), p. 283.

[2] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 185.

Rowe says that the latter part of his life was spent as all men of good sense would wish theirs may be, in ease and retirement, and the society and intercourse of his friends.

Judge Holmes remarks on the same subject as follows:

> "Considering how this man could drop the theatre as an idle pastime, or as a trade that had filled his coffers, and could then sit him down for the remainder of his life, merely to talk and jest with the Stratford burghers, and turning over his works to the spoiling hands of blundering printers and surreptitious traffic, regardless of his own reputation, heedless of the world around him, leaving his manuscripts to perish, taking no thought of foreign nations or the next ages."[1]

Mr. Grant White says:

> "His daughters, rustic born and rustic bred, were married rather late in life to simple village folk, and he *resigned himself to simple village society*."[2]

Mr. Staunton says:[3]

> "From a retrospect of the few materials available for tracing the career of the great dramatist from the time when he is supposed to have left Stratford, we may conjecture him to have arrived in London about the year 1586, and to have joined a theatrical company, to which he remained permanently attached as playwright and actor until 1604. How often and in what characters he performed, where he lived in London, who were his personal friends, what were his habits, and what intercourse he maintained with his family, to what degree he partook of the provincial excursions of his fellows during

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[1] "The Authorship of Shakespeare," vol. i., p. 27.

[2] "Life and Genius of Shakespeare," p. 165.

[3] Staunton's "Shakespeare," p. xxxvii.

this period are points on which it has been shown we have scarcely any reliable information. In or about the year 1604 his history I think reverts to Stratford, where from *the records of the town he would appear to have finally retired, and engaged himself actively in agricultural pursuits.*"

"From this period (1597)," says Mr. Halliwell in his biography of Shakespeare,[1]

> "We find him at intervals of no long duration engaged in transactions which exhibit him as a respectable inhabitant of Stratford, and if not occupied in agricultural matters at least occasionally indulging in negotiations of a kindred character. In 1598 we discover him selling a load of stone to the Corporation of Stratford, probably from his garden at New Place, for the sum of tenpence."

And then says Mr. Halliwell:

> "I am scarcely willing to hazard the conjecture that after he had amassed a capital in ready money he increased it by supplying loans at interest; but there really seems fair grounds for such an opinion."[2]

The following dates given on the authority of Mr. Grant White are vouched either by letters or by the records of the law courts, to which Shakespeare appears to have been not unwilling to have recourse, and they certainly throw some light upon the subject we are considering.

Mr. Grant White says:

> "The fact is rather striking in the life of a great poet, that the only letter in existence addressed to Shakespeare is one which asks for a loan of £30."[3]

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[1] "Life of Shakespeare," p. 171. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[3] "Life and Genius," p. 123.

"There is another letter from a man named Sturley, in 1595, to a friend in London, in reference to Shakespeare lending 'some monei on some od yarde land or other at Shottri or near about us.'"

"Another letter of November 4th, 1598, from the same Sturley to Richard Quiney, in which it is said that 'our countriman Mr. Wm. Shak would procure us monei wh I will like of.'"

"In 1598 he loaned Richard Quiney of Stratford £30 on proper security."

"In 1600 he brought an action against John Clayton in London for £7, and had judgment."

"He also sued Phillip Rogers at Stratford for two shillings loaned."

"In August, 1608, he prosecuted John Addenbrook to recover a debt of £6, and then not getting his money sued Addenbrook's surety, Horneby."

"He sued Phillip Rogers in 1604 for several bushels of malt sold to him at various times between March 27th and the end of May in that year, amounting in the whole to the value of £1 15*s.* 10*d.*"

What strikes me as unusual and hardly to be credited is that a poet's life should be thus mixed up with money-lending.

I much doubt whether the recorded career of any man of mark could exhibit such an union of the poetic faculty with the sordid cares of minute money transactions. Indeed, it would be rare to find the class of mind which bespeaks the poet associated with the trading faculty.

This business capacity which was shown to exist in Shakespeare—together with the sharp looking after small sums, which has left its traces on all the little incidents of his life—has a peculiar bearing on the whole of the Shakespeare story. It is so little like anything we should expect to hear of the author

of these stately plays, with his grand imagination and his deep, far-reaching philosophy, that one shrinks from accepting it as a possible feature in the character of such a man.

When we come to consider this the last period of William Shakespeare's life, you will agree with me, I think, in recognizing the great value of the few facts which have been established for us in framing a true view of his character, and in deciding which of the opposite pictures presented to us most faithfully represents him.

If we are to take the view of the Shakespeareans, we have before us a man poorly educated in his youth, and never by act or word that tradition has preserved for us showing any mental culture or capacity beyond that exhibited in the miserable verses which I have just brought under your notice, or the samples of the "wit-combats."

This man, we are asked to believe, by laborious study, in due time so raised himself in mental capacity as to have been equal to the task of writing the plays which pass by his name, and did so devote himself to the exercise of his newly-found erudition and philosophic knowledge, as to have produced no less than thirty-six dramas which have since been the wonder of the world.

Having done so, he retires from London and the stage, taking no heed of his intellectual progeny, making no provision for their maintenance or protection, to his native town, where he takes to the sort of life and pursuits to which he was destined before he rushed away into the world of intellect

and culture, just as if the intervening twenty years had had no existence.

The mental training through which he had passed seems to have left nothing behind it.

What would you expect of such a man on his return to his native town? That he should cease writing plays, having abandoned his actor life, would not surprise you. But what would be the almost inevitable condition of his mind? His Greek and Latin authors, with whose works his mind had been familiar; the half-finished, or, I should say, embryo designs with which his richly-stored mind was doubtless engaged; what had become of them? The intellectual studies and conceptions, which must have constituted the greatest pleasure of his life; the philosophic thoughts and the bright dreams of his fancy, would they not have found expression in some way? could they all have fled? Could all that he had gathered up of the thoughts or fancies of others have taken wing?

Was it possible that he could at one stride step back to the ignorance of the old Stratford life, and thus abandon the fruition of his long and laborious studies? I have already pointed out to you how unlikely it was that these studies should have been undertaken at all. If they really were so it could only have been for the love of the thing—from the desire to possess knowledge and learning for its own sake. But if so it is inconceivable that the fruits of it should have been lightly thrown away.

The thoughts generated in a mind of high culture could never desert it and be replaced with welcome

by the narrow-minded cares of a money-seeking existence.

One can hardly picture to oneself an intellect and imagination such as gave birth to the plays, relegated to the lending of money or the making of malt.

It is hard to fancy his intellectual work, in which poetry and philosophy went hand in hand, thrown aside to make way for the details of farming, and his books replaced by market prices or the samples of barley or wheat.

Such a mind could never at the age of fifty have rested unproductive.

To sit down contented with a farming life would surely to such a man have been contrary to all experience. And yet this is what according to all testimony this man did.

What a monster then is this that the defendants would present to us! The butcher's apprentice transformed at short notice into the philosopher and poet! Why, it is almost contrary to nature. Well, to be sure, the grub turns into the butterfly, and is not long about it. But who ever heard of the butterfly turning back again into the grub? Yet nothing less than this is offered to our belief. From the moment he got back to Stratford he dropped his butterfly wings—tilling his own land, wholly occupied in the making and selling of malt, and other agricultural pursuits. If it was difficult to believe in William Shakespeare's transformation, it is harder still to give credit to his relapse.

And the story thus told in his own conduct is corroborated by the outward circumstances.

During the days of his authorship he must needs have possessed many books, and even if he had no correspondence, his pen must still have produced much beyond what was published in his plays. Where were all these things at his death? Had he no manuscripts, no copies of any of the Quarto editions of his own plays?

At this great distance of time it would be absurd to expect much knowledge in detail of his possessions. But we are not without some proof, and very precise proof too, of the contents of his household.

For there is his will, up to the present hour preserved in the Registry of the Probate Court.

It will interest you to observe how minutely particular he was in the distribution of his little possessions.

THE WILL.

"To sister Joan, £20 and all my wearing apparel, and the house in which she dwelleth, under the yearly rent of 12 pence.

"To Eliz. Hall, all my plate except my brod silver and gilt bole.

"To Wm. Combes, my sword.

"To Thomas Russell, £5.

"To Francis Collins, £13 6*s*. 8*d*.

"To several, rings.

"To Susannah Hall, New Place and all my barns, stables, orchards, gardens, under tenants and hereditaments.

"To my wife, my second-best bed and furniture.

"To Judith, my silver-gilt bole.

"All the rest of my goods, chattels, team, plate, jewels and household stuff, to John Hall and his wife, and make them Exors.

"Draft dated January 25th.

"Executed 24th March, 1616."

If he had possessed a single manuscript or print of any one play—a single notebook—the works of a single favourite author—a single fragment, written or printed, associated with the labours of his literary life, calculated to remind his daughters or other relatives of the work which had made him famous—is it not inevitable that they would have found a place in the bequests of his will?

That nothing of the kind is to be found, there looks very much as if nothing of the kind existed, and if the plaintiffs are right in the very different picture they draw of him it is not to be wondered at.

I now turn to what seems to me to be the most notable argument which the defendants have adduced in support of their case.

I allude to the Warwickshire, or I might almost say the Stratford names, which have been introduced into some of the plays.

I pass by the contention that Warwickshire words are to be found freely scattered throughout them, because this matter was elaborately thrashed out in the "Daily Telegraph" correspondence, and it was there shown that the words which appear were in use in other counties as freely as in the county of Warwick.[1] Upon a close examination of these pro-

[1] See "Dethroning Shakespeare," p. 105, edited by R. M. Theobald, published by Messrs. Sampson Low, 1888.

vincial expressions it was shown that out of 518 such words there were only forty-six which are not as current in Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire as they are in Warwickshire. And not one of these forty-six is to be found in the plays.

These are the statements made by Mrs. Pott in answer to the matters pressed by Mr. John Taylor on behalf of the Defendants, and I do not find that they have been since contradicted.

It would be an unpardonable waste of your time if I were to be tempted into reviewing the numerous letters, assertions and counter-assertions upon isolated points which that correspondence elicited, but you can consult them yourselves at your leisure.

It is different, I think, with the Warwickshire names which are to be found in the plays.

It appears to me that a serious argument is very fairly and properly founded upon the use of these names in favour of the Shakespeare authorship. I will bring the facts before you, and you shall judge.

It appears, then, that some of the characters are made to bear Warwickshire names, such as Ford, Page, Evans, Oliver, Sly, Marion Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, Curtis, Barton on the Heath, and so on. Upon this it is fairly argued, I think, that such names could hardly have been made use of by mere chance. Some of them are distinctly connected with Stratford, and "Marion Hacket of Wincot" was a real personage of those parts. No one can deny that William Shakespeare was infinitely

more likely than Bacon or any other person not nearly connected with the neighbourhood of Stratford to invest his imaginary characters with these local names.

There are, I think, only two reasonable explanations offered to this. One, and the most natural, is to be found in the suggestion that much of the ribald talk with which the plays are in some parts of them garnished to suit the taste of the audiences of that day, never came from the pen of the man who wrote the plays, but were put in by William Shakespeare who prepared the plays for the stage, and that these local names had the same origin.

Mr. Appleton Morgan offers the following as an explanation of it:

> "If, as has been conjectured, William Shakespeare sketched the clowns and wenches with which these stately dramas are relieved, it would account for the supposed Warwickshire source of many of them. And if William Shakespeare was pretty familiar with the constabulary along his route between home and theatre, so often travelled by himself and jolly companions with heads full of Marian Hacket's ale, and thought some of them good enough to put into a play, his judgment has received the approval of many audiences besides those of Bankside and Blackfriars.[1]
>
> "And if, as has been suggested, Mr. Manager Shakespeare dressed up his friends' dialogues for his own stage, and tucked in the clowns and jades, this usage of Warwickshire names might well be accounted for. Four of these names are taken out of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' and three from the introduction to 'The Taming of a Shrew': matter in the composition of

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1 "Shakespearean Myth," p. 298.

which Shakespeare, or any other playwright, might well have had the largest hand.[1]

* * * * * * *

[1] "For the Cardinals and Kings do not use these phrases, nor, we may add, are the surnames he mentions ever bestowed on them, *but only on the low-comedy characters of the plays.*"

It has also been suggested that it is not impossible that these Stratford personages have been purposely introduced to foster the belief in the authorship of Shakespeare, which it would be the object of the real author, whoever he was, to bring about.

Whether these answers are satisfactory must be submitted to your better judgment. I do not think that I could aid you by further comment.

I should like to have been able to place before you anything like a connected argument put forward and published by any of the supporters of the Defendants. But I have not met with anything of the kind. I have consulted the writings of Mr. Grant White, who, by his learning and the great amount of able study which he has bestowed on the plays, and indeed upon the life of William Shakespeare, would be the most capable person to undertake the task. But I am disappointed. What he has to say on the subject is summed up in the general statement that "the notion that Bacon wrote the plays is not worth five minutes' serious consideration by any reasonable creature." This is his method of disputation, from which I draw the conclusion that, being as he must be, I am sure, a reasonable creature,

[1] "Shakespearean Myth," p. 248.

he has never given five minutes' serious consideration to the question.

After this it was not likely that I should find much weighty argument. In place of it I only found somewhat weighty humour. A madhouse was always to be kept ready for those who were afflicted by this craze, and an ambulance to carry the patient on the first symptoms, etc., etc. If, however, argument is absent, there is no lack of assertion. Bacon, he says, was utterly without the poetic faculty, even in a secondary degree."[1]

In this he does not agree with Shelley, who describes Bacon as "*a great poet, one whose language has a sweet majestic rhythm which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect.*"

To Shelley might be added the opinion of Macaulay, who says:

> "The poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind, but not, like his wit, so powerful as occasionally to usurp the place of his reason, and tyrannize over the whole man."

Charles Knight (speaking of Masques) says:

> "Bacon, whose own mind was essentially poetical, has an 'Essay of Masques and Triumphs.' His notions are full of taste."[2]

Again Mr. White says of Bacon, that he is

> "Sweet sometimes, sound always, but dry, stiff and formal."[3]

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[1] "Studies in Shakespeare," p. 180.
[2] "Biography," p. 303.
[3] "Studies in Shakespeare," p. 179.

I wonder if Mr. White has ever read the "Advancement of Learning." In the passage I am about to quote from that work Bacon desired to convey the idea, that what ought to be the true object of all knowledge was often lost sight of, and this is the dry, stiff and formal way in which he did it.

> "But the greatest error of all the rest is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge; for men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession, and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason to the use and benefit of men; as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and a restless spirit, or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect, or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon, or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention, or a shop for profit and sale, and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate."

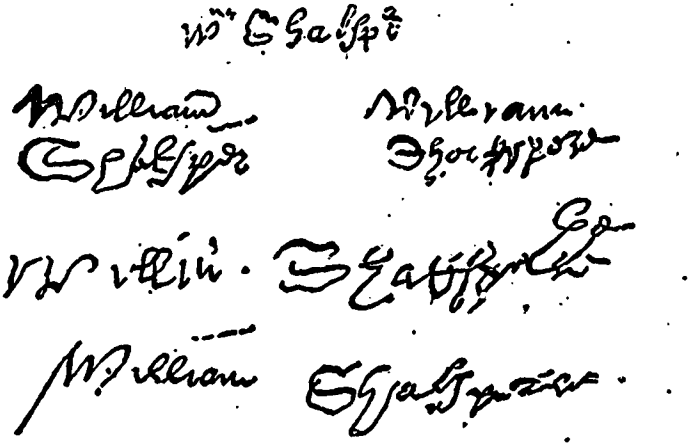
Mr. White having failed me, I sought elsewhere, but with the exception of criticisms and small facts relating to isolated points, I could find nothing to lay before you in the way of argument or answer to the objections freely urged against the Shakespearean authorship. On the other hand, silly abuse has been plentiful. Here is a specimen:

> "The idea of Lord Bacon's having written Shakespeare's Plays can only be entertained by folk who know nothing whatever of either writer, or who are crackt (*sic*), or who enjoy the paradox or joke. Poor Miss

Delia Bacon, who started the notion, was, no doubt, then mad, as she was afterwards proved to be when shut in an asylum. Lord Palmerston, with his Irish humour, naturally took to this theory as he would have done to the suggestion that Benjamin D'Israeli wrote the Gospel of St. John. If Judge Holmes' book is not meant as a practical joke like Archbishop Whately's historic doubts, or proof that Napoleon never lived, then he must be set down as characteristic-blind like some men are colour-blind. I doubt whether any so idiotic suggestion as this authorship of Shakespeare's works by Bacon had ever been made before, or ever will be made again with regard to either Bacon or Shakespeare. The tomfoolry of it is infinite."

And now there is only one matter left, I think; and it is one upon which discussion or comment is needless.

"Certain it is his autographs do not look like the work of a scholarly man. The following cut is a representation of all the signatures known, beyond question, to have been written by Shakespeare:



"The first is from Malone's facsimile of a mortgage deed which has been lost; the second is from a

conveyance in the possession of the corporation of London; the other three are from the three sheets of paper constituting his Will."

The three last signatures are all to the same document—his Will. The other two are to deeds. The will was executed several weeks before his death, and at a time when there is no suggestion that he was out of health.

What do you think of them? and what of the labour of writing thirty-six plays by the same hand?

I have now, I think, completed my task so far as the Shakespeare case is concerned. But on the assumption that you are not satisfied that we owe these plays to William Shakespeare, it remains to be considered whether the debt is really due to the memory of Francis Bacon.

But before entering upon that question I will take the liberty of again reminding you that the burthen of displacing William Shakespeare from the authorship so long attributed to him lies upon the plaintiffs. It is their business to bring your minds and judgement to the conclusion that his reputed authorship rests upon no sufficient basis of fact to support it, and if they have failed in this they fail altogether.

In dealing with the question whether these plays are to be attributed to Francis Bacon, it is somewhat singular that the first argument that suggests itself is the very converse of that which the Baconians press so strongly against the authorship of Shakespeare. Shakespeare, they say, did not

write the plays because, for want of the needful learning and knowledge, he could not have done so; and Bacon did write them, because he was the only man in England who could have done so. There were, no doubt, many very able men in England in those days. You may remember that I quoted from Mr. Grant White a list of Shakespeare's eminent contemporaries—Raleigh, Sidney, Spenser, Cecil, Walsingham, Coke, Camden, Hooker, Drake, Hobbes, Inigo Jones, Herbert of Cherbury, Laud, Pim, Hampden, Selden, Walton, Wotton and Dunne.

In the evidence before us I find another list of a similar character mentioned in the "Dethroning of Shakespeare" as proceeding from Ben Jonson, who, after enumerating the chief ancient dramatic poets, goes on as follows, naming the greatest wits of his own time: Moore, Wyatt, Surrey, Challoner, Smith, Eliot, B. Gardiner, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, Hooker, Essex, Raleigh, Savile, Sandys, Egerton, and finally Bacon; *not mentioning Shakespeare at all*, which is not easily to be explained if he really thought him to have been the author of the plays.

I am not aware that we have before us any other enumeration of the great wits of those days. It is among these names then that I invite you to suggest to yourselves the name of any individual worthy to stand in competition with Francis Bacon as the probable or even possible writer of the immortal plays.

In this task I am unable to assist you. There is

nothing in the facts or testimony which have been adduced in this controversy (so far as we are concerned in it) which enables us to appreciate the capacities of the great men whose names I have just enumerated. No other author of the plays than Shakespeare or Bacon has been hitherto suggested, so far as I am aware. If such a name should be suggested in future, it may be well to note the nature and extent of the multifarious knowledge in which the real author, whoever he may have been, was proficient.

It is, I conceive, an indispensable condition that he should have been a man not only well trained in the principles, rules and maxims of our law, but familiar with the daily work of the conveyancer and the forms and technicalities of the Courts at Westminster. In short, he must have received the regular legal education which men ordinarily receive who desire and intend to practise the law as a profession.

This requirement must of necessity very much curtail the number of possible candidates.

Bearing this in mind, and with it the wide classical knowledge and philosophical mind of the writer, the possible number of authors must have been very small, if, indeed, they were not restricted to a single name. If the plays had been published anonymously and had remained so up to the present time, is there a name which could have been suggested in comparison with that of Bacon?

Modern languages, at that epoch less known and less thought of than Latin or Greek, had formed a

large part of his studies, and he had read largely in the literature of both Italy and France.

It is needless that I should attempt to recapitulate again the varied and almost encyclopaedic character of the knowledge accumulated in the mind of the man who wrote these plays. You will naturally bear this in mind.

Let us now turn to some of the objections urged against the authorship of Bacon. It has been objected that what one witness calls the archaic forms used in the plays are never to be found in Bacon's works, and that "some of Shakespeare's most taking expressions are to be found not in the literature of the sixteenth, but in that of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." To this it has been replied that Bacon was a complete master of language, provincial and archaic, as well as classical or modern; and that it was recorded of him that his acquaintance with all country terms was such that he could talk to any man in the peculiar language or dialect used by the person he addressed. And in proof of this assertion a vast number of words have been cited which are to be found in Bacon's works. The list of them is too long to be cited here at any length; but I may give specimens.

If you leave your "*staddles*" too thick, you shall never have clean underwood—he shall "*mew*" them —trifles and "*gingles*"—"*chopping*" bargains—a "*seeled*" dove—this "*slug*" of usury—a "*knap*" of ground—great cities which "*lurcheth*" all provisions—where a man is "*scanted*"—low edges like "*welts*"—"*catching*" and "*polling*" (plundering)

clerks—fruitful "*havings*"—kinsfolk of the "*lump*"—envy a "*gadding*" passion—"*knee-timber*"—money like "*muck*"—a "*bald noddle*"—scourged without "*quecking*"—they are "*gazed*"—a "*dry flout*"—to "*can*," to "*proyn*," to "*queech*"—"*oes or spangs*"—"*gaudery*."

All these expressions, it is urged, are to be found in the "Essays" of Bacon. In his "Notes on Husbandry, Gardening and Experimental Science," it is asserted that Bacon has written in suitable country language. He speaks of a dead "*stub*" of a tree—of little stalks and "*low thrum*"—of the "*chessome*" and "*mellow*" earth. Again, he says strong smells are best in a "*a weft*" afar off—stuff whereof "*copples*" are made—"*tears*" of trees, etc., etc.

And it is contended that Bacon (who is found continually bringing these homely expressions even into his studied works or rhetorical speeches), was quite as familiar with their use as the author of the plays could have been.

This branch of the controversy is, I think, a not unfair specimen of the causes which, in many minds, have made it difficult to give credence to the authorship of Bacon. His great reputation as a philosopher, and the dry abstract subjects to the elucidation of which his principal labours and written works were devoted, have led to the very natural inference that nothing of so different a kind as poetry, or other work of the imagination, could proceed from him; and in all probability the greater part of those who have formed this view of him have

not cared to study his actual works with assiduity, or sought with much care for what they so little expected to find.

I will now turn to a different subject, and one which, I think, deserves your careful consideration.

You will remember that several letters have been put before you written by Sir Tobie Matthew to Bacon.

There was a great intimacy between these two men, and Bacon was in the habit of submitting to Matthew many of his writings from time to time.

> "There is," says Mr. Appleton Morgan, "in many of Bacon's preserved lettters, something suggestive of a curious undermeaning, impressing the reader with an idea of more than appears upon the surface."[1]

Such, for instance, as the passage in one of Bacon's letters in which he desires Matthew to be "careful of the writings submitted to you that no one may see them."

This Sir Tobie Matthew has been spoken of as a reprobate, but without, I think, sufficient warrant.

In Wood's "Athenae Oxonienses" is the following account of him:

> "Tobie Matthew, the eldest son of Dr. Tobie Matthew, Archbishop of York, was born in Oxon, and matriculated there in 1589. He became a noted Orator and Disputant, and taking his degree in Arts, travelled into various countries. At his return he was taken into the acquaintance of Sir Francis Bacon, and between them there passed divers letters which, if collected, might make a pretty volume. After growing famous for

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1 "The Shakespearean Myth" (Appleton Morgan), p. 237.

his eminency in politics, he came to England upon invitation, and in October, 1623, was knighted for his zeal in carrying on the Spanish match. At which time not only the King, but the chief of the nobility and others at court had a high value for him."

There is no doubt that he was an early friend of Bacon's, who spoke of him as his "Inquisitor," because he was in the habit of sending his writings to him for his perusal and criticism. A collection of some letters passing between them is still in existence. These are most of them without dates, and it is said that names and particulars have been purposely obliterated or disguised. If the headings were inserted by Matthew himself, he had either forgotten the dates or intended to confuse and conceal them.

In letters to Sir Tobie, Bacon whilst alluding by name to certain of his own works which Sir Tobie had been reading and criticising, speaks (without naming them) of "other works," or "works of his recreation." Some of these works indeed are mysteriously alluded to under the name of "The Alphabet."

Now it is contended by the Plaintiffs that these general allusions to "other works," "works of my recreation," and particularly works of "The Alphabet," were intended to apply to some of the Shakespeare Plays, which he was from time to time sending to Tobie Matthew for his criticism; and in proof of this they rely more particularly upon two or three letters I am about to read to you.

First, there is a letter from Tobie Matthew to Bacon, in which he says:

> "I will not promise to return you weight for weight, but 'measure for measure,' and I must tell you beforehand that you are not to expect any other stuff from me than fustian and bombast and such wares as that. For there is no venturing in richer commodities, and much less upon such as are forbidden. Neither, indeed, do we know what is forbidden and what is not," etc., etc.

And then we find Francis Bacon writing to Tobie Matthew, and saying:

> "Of this, when you were here I showed you some model, at what time methought you were more willing to hear '*Julius Cæsar*' than *Queen Elizabeth* commended."

And, lastly, there is the mysterious postscript in a letter from Matthew to Bacon, dated 9th April, 1623. The letter is written in answer to one from Bacon, which was accompanied by the gift of something which Matthew thanks him for in these terms:

> "I have received your great and noble token and favour of the 9th of April, and can but return the humblest of my thanks for your lordship's vouchsafing so to visit the poorest and unworthiest of your servants," etc., etc.

And then comes the postscript:

> "P.S.—The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation and of this side of the sea is of your lordship's name, though he be known by another."

This "great and noble token of his lordship's favour," to which Sir Tobie only alludes, and which in his usually mysterious manner in this correspondence he does not specify, it is contended by the Plaintiffs was nothing less than a copy of the Folio

of 1623. And they say that there was nothing else of Bacon's writing published during the spring of 1623 which he could very well be sending to Matthew.

The following further letters will show you the mysterious character of the allusions contained in correspondence.

About the years 1605 to 1609 Bacon writes:

> "My 'Instauration' I reserve for our conference; it sleeps not. Those works of the 'Alphabet' are in my opinion of less use to you where you are now, than at Paris; and therefore I conceived that you had sent me a kind of tacit countermand of your former request. But in regard that some friends of yours have still insisted here, I send them to you; and for my part, I value your own reading more than your publishing them to others."

In another letter he writes:

> "I have sent you some copies of my book of the 'Advancement' which you desired, and a *little work of my recreation* which you desired not."

One naturally asks, What works could Bacon have meant when he spoke of "these works of the Alphabet"? The Plaintiffs think they have found a possible, if not a probable explanation of it, which is derived from a passage in Bacon's note-book, called by him his "Promus."

The entry runs thus:

> "Iisdem e literis tragedia et comedia efficitur."

There is no question, I believe, of the authenticity of these several letters, and although one would

hardly have expected that a man in the position of Sir Tobie would have been selected as the critic of his dramatic works—if he had written any such—we must remember that Bacon would probably have been more solicitous about the sure safety of his secret than of anything else, and that he looked upon Sir Tobie as a safe friend in whom he could confide.

It cannot be doubted, I think, but that he counted upon Matthew as a true friend.

> "During the short time he was over here he was continually with Bacon," says Mr. Smith. "Indeed, Bacon spoke of him in a letter to Collington, 'as true a friend as either you or I have.'"

Thomas Chamberlayn writes to Sir Dudley Carleton of Tobie Matthew:

> "Perhaps he presumes on the Lord Keeper's favour, which indeed is very great now at first if it continues, for he lodges him at York House and carries him next week along with him to his house at Gorhambury."

Respecting his capacity as a critic we are told by his biographer that he

> "affected the reputation of a man of universal genius, and certainly possessed many accomplishments."

His reverence and admiration for Bacon seem to have been unbounded. He thus describes him:

> "He was a creature of incomparable abilities of mind; of a sharp and catching apprehension; large and faithful memory; plentiful and sprouting invention; deep and solid judgment, for as much as might concern the understanding part; a man so rare in knowledge of so many

> several kinds; indued with the facility and felicity of expressing it all in so elegant, significant, so abundant, and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors and allusions, as perhaps the world has not seen since it was a world."

I do not know what you may think of these letters, gentlemen, but as pieces of evidence they are undoubtedly well worth an attentive examination.

Let us see what they prove with anything like certainty, and what are the conclusions which may reasonably, although by no means certainly, be drawn from them.

It is certain then, I think, that some at least of the "writings" (I adopt Bacon's word) which he from time to time sent to Matthew for his perusal and criticism were writings which he did not desire others to see. This is pretty plainly the case, because on so many occasions they were not given a name but only called "writings." Again, we have Bacon telling Matthew in one of his letters "to be careful of the writings submitted to you that no one may see them." So far so good. Now let us see what reason there is to conclude that these "writings" were, many of them, the plays which we know as the Shakespeare Plays. On this head everything, as it seems to me, depends upon the view which you take of the two letters, one from Matthew and the other from Bacon, in which the names of two of the Shakespeare Plays are mentioned. "I will not promise to return you weight for weight, but measure for measure," said Tobie Matthew in writing to his friend. Are you assured that these words,

"measure for measure," were intended as a covert allusion to the play of that name? That is the first question. But if so the next question is, Did the writer make this allusion in reference to Bacon's authorship, or did he refer to the name of the play for any other purpose, and if so, for what purpose? If we knew the date of the letter we might compare it with the earliest knowledge which we have of the public appearance of the play. This would be a great help, and might be decisive if the letter was written before the play had been made public.

Now let us consider the other letter, Bacon's letter about Julius Caesar. "Of this when you were here I showed you some model, *at what time methought* you were more *willing to hear Julius Caesar* than Queen Elizabeth commended." What is the meaning of hearing Julius Caesar commended? Did he mean the man or the play?[1] In all this there is plenty of room for surmise or conjecture. I should say it comes to this: these letters contain abundant material to strongly confirm an opinion already formed of Bacon's authorship; but they form but a feeble support for that opinion, standing alone.

There is another subject upon which the Baconians lay considerable stress. I allude to the personal history of Francis Bacon, his employments, engagements, and pursuits during the period of time covered by the production of the plays.

He was sent at the early age twelve or thirteen

[1] See note on p. 35 of J. Spedding's reprint of Bacon's "Conference of Pleasure."

to the University, where he became at once an untiring student. In 1576, while still young, he was attached to the suite of Mr. Amyas Paulet, then Ambassador to France from this country. For some time he was with the Court, where he learnt the French language as well as Italian, and to some extent Spanish, and mixed in all the frivolities and gaieties attending a Court life. Afterwards he was for three years at Poitiers, where he devoted himself to study. The death of his father, Sir Nicolas Bacon, brought him back to England. The loss of the provision which his father had intended for him drove him to the necessity of studying law as a profession; and in the year 1581 he began to keep his terms at Gray's Inn. In the year 1582 he was called to the Bar. In 1586 he was made a Bencher; and in the following year took an active part in getting up the revels at Gray's Inn. In 1588 he was returned as a member of Parliament by Liverpool. By the year 1592, when he was arrested for debt, he had become much pressed for money. In 1593 there was a great entertainment at Gray's Inn, on which occasion he took a principal part. At this time, Christmas of 1593, William Shakespeare appeared (as is stated in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber), in the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors, before Queen Elizabeth. This is the first mention we possess of Shakespeare by name after his arrival in London.

And now, gentlemen, I come to what is in my own opinion the most important matter bearing on the probability that these plays came in truth from the hand of Francis Bacon.

Great pains and industry have been applied in collecting the phrases, and peculiar words and *groups* and *associations of words*, which are to be met with alike in the writings of Bacon and in these celebrated plays.

Many of them have been laid before you in the book of Judge Holmes;[1] and the work has been still more elaborately performed in the book published by Mr. Donelly.

I have put together selections taken from Mr. Donelly's book for your consideration; but to do anything like justice to this branch of our subject you should study the complete compilation to be found in that gentleman's book.[2]

In handing this list to you, I believe that I discharge the last of the duties which I have undertaken, and the solution of the questions which have been raised now rests in your hands.

	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.		
295	It is very cold. It is a nipping and *an eager air.*	Whereby the cold becomes more *eager.*
	* * *	* * *
295	*Light thickens.* And the crow makes wing to the rocky wood.	For the over-moisture of the brain doth *thicken* the spirits visual.
	* * *	* * *

[1] "The Authorship of Shakespeare" (Judge Holmes). Judge Holmes is a son of the well-known author Oliver Wendell Holmes.

[2] "The Great Cryptogram," vol. i., p. 295.

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly. 295 Th' *expense* of *spirit* in a waste of shame.	The cause of dimness of sight is the *expense* of *spirits*.
296 I am never merry when I hear sweet music; The reason is your *spirits* are *attentive*.	Some noises help sleep, as . . . soft singing. The cause is, for that they *move* in the *spirits a gentle attention*.
* * *	* * *
297 If Heaven have any grievous plague in store, Exceeding those that I can wist upon thee, Oh, let them keep it, till thy sins be ripe, And then hurl down their indignation On thee, *the troubler of the* poor *world's* peace.	That gigantic state of mind which possesseth *the troublers of the world*, such as was Lucius Sylla.
* * *	* * *
297 Which is to bring Signor Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a *mountain* of *affection*, the one with the other.	Perkin sought to corrupt the servants of the lieutenant of the Tower by *mountains* of *promises*.
* * *	* * *
298 There's a divinity that shapes our ends, *Rough-hew* them how we will.	Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own. A *rough-hewn* seaman.
* * *	* * *
299 Cowards *die many times* before their death.	Men have their time, and *die many times*, in desire of something which they principally take to heart.
* * *	* * *
299 To *thine own self be true*, And it must follow, as the night the day,	The even carriage between two factions proceedeth not always of moderation,

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
Thou canst not then be *false to any man.*	but of *a trueness to a man's self*, with end to make use of both.
	Be so true to thyself as thou be not *false to others.*
* * *	* * *
299 O Heaven! a beast, that wants *discourse* of *reason*, Would have mourned longer.	God hath done great things by her (*i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth) past *discourse* of *reason.*
300 Sure, He that made us with such large *discourse*, Looking before and after, gave us not That capability and god-like reason To fust in us unused.	Martin Luther out in *discourse of reason*, finding, etc.
	True fortitude is not given to man by nature, but must grow out of *discourse* of *reason.*
* * *	* * *
300 For in the very torrent, *tempest*, and as I may say, *the whirlwind* of your passion.	But men, . . . if they be not carried away with a *whirlwind* or *tempest* of ambition.
* * *	* * *
300 *Life's but a* walking *shadow.*	Let me live to serve you, else *life* is but the *shadow of death* to your Majesty's most devoted servant.
* * *	* * *
301 'Tis a tale Told by an idiot, full of *sound* and *fury*, *Signifying nothing.*	It is nothing else but words, *which rather sound than signify anything.*
* * *	* * *
301 What a piece of work is a man! . . . The paragon of animals; *the beauty of the world.*	The souls of the living are *the beauty of the world.*

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
302 Ay, gentle Thurio; for you know that *love* *Must creep in service where it cannot go.*	This being but a leaf or two, I pray your pardon if I send it for your recreation, considering that *love must creep where it cannot go.*
* * *	* * *
304 *Infirm of purpose.* Give me the daggers.	All those who have in some measure committed themselves to the waters of experience, seeing they were *infirm of purpose*, etc.
* * *	* * *
305 As *mild and gentle* as the cradled babe. I will be *mild and gentle* in my words.	Flame, at the moment of its generation, is *mild and gentle.*
* * *	* * *
305 This is the *ape of form*, monsieur the nice. O sleep, thou *ape of death.*	Custom, . . . an *ape of nature.*
* * *	* * *
305 Holding such *enmity with blood* of *man.* A lingering dram, that should not *work maliciously* like poison. Though parting be a fretful *corrosive*, It is applied to a deathful wound.	Medicine . . . of secret *malignity* and *disagreement towards man's body*, ... it worketh either by *corrosion* or by a secret *malignity* and *enmity to nature.*
* * *	* * *
306 A ruined *piece of nature.*	The nature of sounds in general hath been superficially observed. It s one of the subtilest *pieces of nature.*

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
307 The *soft and tender* fork of a poor worm.	The fire maketh them *soft* and *tender*.
As *soft and tender* flattery.	
Beneath your *soft and tender* breathing.	
* * *	* * *
307 Anon, as patient as the female dove, When that her golden couplets are *disclosed*, His silence will sit brooding.	The ostrich layeth her eggs under the sand, where the heat of the sun *discloseth* them.
* * *	* * *
307 The air *smells wooingly* here.	For those *smells do* . . . rather *woo* the sense than satiate it.
* * *	* * *
308 High *fantastical*.	Which showeth a *fantastical spirit*.
A mad, *fantastical* trick.	*Fantastical* learning.
A *fantastical* knave.	
Telling her *fantastical lies*.	
* * *	* * *
308 What is this *quintessence* of dust?	So as your wit shall be whetted with conversing with many great wits, and you shall have the cream and *quintessence* of every one of theirs.
The *quintessence* of every sprite.	
* * *	* * *
309 A dream itself is *but a shadow*.	All whatsoever you have or can say in answer hereof are *but shadows*.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
310	Malice of thy *swelling heart.*	Fullness and *swellings* of *the heart.*
	Their *swelling griefs.*	
	The *swelling act* of the imperial scene.	
	* * *	* * *
310	Of *base and bloody* insurrection.	The most *base, bloody* and envious persons.
	The *sovereign'st* thing on earth	*Sovereign* medicines for the mind.
	Was parmacetti for an inward bruise.	
	* * *	* * *
311	The *quality* of mercy is not strained.	The *quality* of health and strength.
	The *quality* of the flesh.	
	The *quality* of her passion.	
	* * *	* * *
311	*The top of* sovereignty.	*The top of* . . . workmanship.
	The top of judgment.	*The top of* human desires.
	The top of all design.	*The top of* all worldly bliss.
	* * *	* * *
311	*The bottom of* my place.	He might have known *the bottom of* his danger.
312	*The bottom of* your purpose.	
	The very *bottom of* my soul.	
	Searches to *the bottom of* the worst.	
	* * *	* * *
312	*The* poor *abuses of the times.*	*The abuses of the times.*
	* * *	* * *
312	Environed with a *wilderness of sea.*	In the midst of the greatest *wilderness of waters.*
	A *wilderness* of tigers.	
	A *wilderness* of monkeys.	

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
313	*Lend* me *your ears.*	Standing all at a gaze about him, and *lend their ears* to his music.
	* * *	* * *
	Should *move* *The stones* of Rome *to rise* and mutiny.	Orpheus drew the woods and *moved the very stones to come.*
314	The *vapour* of our valour.	The *vapours* of ambition.
	The *vapour* of my glory.	
	* * *	* * *
314	And drove great Mars *to faction.*	She was most affectionate of her kindred, even *unto faction.*
	* * *	* * *
316	This *spice* of your hypocrisy.	A *spice* of madness.
	* * *	* * *
316	Our *sea-walled* garden.	Our *sea-walls* and good shipping.
	* * *	* * *
317	Do you find Your patience so *predominant in your nature?*	Divers things that were *predominant in the king's nature.*
	* * *	* * *
321	Therefore *the poet* *Did feign that Orpheus draw trees, stones and floods.*	For *the poets feigned that Orpheus* . . . did call and assemble the beasts and birds . . . to stand about him, as in a theatre; and soon after *called* likewise the *stones and woods* to remove.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
323	When *we are born we cry* that we are come To this great *stage* of fools. Thou knowest the first time that we smell the air. *We wawl and cry.*	God sends men headlong *into this wretched theatre*, where being arrived their first language is that of *mourning*.
	* * *	* * *
323	So from hour to hour we *ripe and ripe*, And then from hour to hour we rot and rot. Men must endure Their going hence, even as their coming hither; *Ripeness* is all.	Man is made *ripe* for death.
	* * *	* * *
325	The fated sky Gives us free scope; only doth *backward pull* Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull. My fortune *runs against the bias*.	To them whose fortunes *run back*.
	* * *	* * *
326	I every day expect an embassage From my Redeemer to *redeem* me hence.	Unto such, *death is a redeemer*.
	* * *	* * *
	That their souls May make a *peaceful* and a *sweet retire*. His new kingdom of perpetual *rest*. Oh, here Will I set up my everlasting rest.	And the grave a place of *retirement and rest*.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
326	That *woo'd* the slimy bottom of the deep, And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered there.	*Wooing* the remorseless sisters to wind down the watch of their life, and to break them off before the hour.
	More inconstant than the wind which *woos* Even now the frozen bosom of the north.	
	The heaven's breath Smells *wooingly* here.	
	* * *	* * *
	He is *winding* up the *watch* of his wit.	*To wind down* the *watch* of their life.
	* * *	* * *
328	The Queen that bore thee, Oftener upon her knees than on her feet *Died every day* she lived.	So much of our life as we have already discovered is already dead . . . *for we die daily.*
	* * *	* * *
328	At your birth *Our grandam, earth*, having this distemperature, In passion shook.	Until we return to *our grandmother, the earth.*
	* * *	* * *
328	KATH. I knew you at the first, You were a *moveable.* PET. Why, what's a *moveable?* KATH. A joint-stool.	There is nothing under heaven saving a true friend who cannot be counted among the *moveables.*

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
329 O proud death, What *feast* is forward in thine eternal cell?	They desired to be excused from *death's banquet*.
Oh malignant and ill-boding stars! Now thou art come unto a *feast of death*.	
* * *	* * *
Just *death's* kind umpire of men's miseries With sweet *enlargement* doth dismiss me hence.	Looking at the blessings, not the hand that *enlarged* them,
* * *	* * *
329 O ye mighty gods! This world I do renounce; and in your sights *Shake* patiently my great affliction *off*.	The soul having *shaken off her flesh*.
What dreams may come, When we have *shuffled off* this mortal coil.	
* * *	* * *
329 *The fingers of the powers* above *do tune* The harmony of this peace.	The soul . . . shows *what finger hath enforced* her.
* * *	* * *
336 What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug Will *scour* these English *hence*?	And so this traitor Essex made his colour the *scouring* of some noblemen and counsellors *from* her Majesty's favour.
* * *	* * *
337 This is the *imposthume* of much wealth and peace,	He that *turneth* the *humours back* and *maketh the wound*

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
	That inward breaks, and shows no cause without Why the man dies.	*bleed inwards*, ingendereth malign ulcers and pernicious *imposthumations*.
		Augustus Caesar out of great indignation against his two daughters and Posthumous Agrippa his grandchild . . . would say—"that they were not his seed, but some *imposthumes* that had broken from him."
	* * *	* * *
337	A kind of medicine in itself That *skins the vice o'er the top*.	We are here to search *the wounds* of the realm, not to *skin them over*.
	Mother, for love of grace, Lay not that flattering unction to your soul, That not your trespass, but my madness speaks: It will but *skin* and film *the ulcerous place*; Whilst rank corruption *mining* all *within*, *Infects unseen*.	A *profound* kind of fallacies . . . the force thereof is such as it . . . doth more generally and *inwardly infect* and *corrupt*.
	* * *	* * *
338	Not poppy nor mandragora, Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world, Shall ever *medicine* thee to that sweet sleep, Which thou owedst yesterday.	The *medicining* of the mind.
	Great *griefs*, I see, *medicine* the less.	Let the balm distil everywhere, from your sovereign hands to *the medicining* of any part that complaineth.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
339	Thus far into the *bowels of the land*, Have we marched without impediment.	This tale is wise and seems taken out of the *bowels of morality*.
	Into the *bowels of the battle*.	If any state be yet free from his factions, *erected in the bowels thereof*.
	The bowels of ungrateful *Rome*.	
	The *bowels of the deep*.	
	* * *	* * *
340	How shall we stretch our eye When capital crimes *chewed*, *swallowed* and *digested* Appear before us.	Some books are to be tasted, others to be *swallowed*, some few to *be chewed* and *digested*.
	* * *	* * *
340	*You're a fair viol*, and your sense the strings, Who, fingered to make man his lawful music, Would draw heaven down and all the gods to hearken.	The office of medicine is to tune this curious *harp of man's body* and reduce it to harmony.
	Harp not on that string, madam.	They did *strike upon a string* that was more dangerous.
341	I would 'twere something that would *fret the string*, The master-cord on 's heart.	The king was much moved . . . because it *struck upon that string* which even he most feared.
	* * *	* * *
342	Nay, patience, or we break the *sinews of our plot*.	We should intercept his (the King of Spain's) treasure, whereby we shall cut his sinews.
342	The portion and *sinew of her fortune*.	The very springs and *sinews of industry*.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
342	And *dressed* myself *in* such *humility*.	Behaviour seemeth to me as *a garment* of the mind.
	The garment of rebellion.	
	Was the *hope* drunk wherein you *dressed* yourself?	
	* * *	* * *
344	MRS PAGE. Come to the forge with it then; shape it. I would not have things cool.	There is *shaped a tale in London's forge* that *beateth* apace at this time.
	Note.—Here we have in the one case a *tale shaped in the forge*, in the other a *plan* is to be *shaped in a forge*.	
344	In the *quick forge* and *working house* of thought.	Though it be my fortune to be *the anvil* upon which these good effects are *beaten and wrought*.
	I cannot do it yet, I'll *hammer* it out of my brain.	He stayed for a better hour till the *hammer* had *wrought* and *beat* the party of Britain more *pliant*.
	* * *	* * *
345	The *dregs of the storm* be past.	The *dregs of this age*.
	Some certain *dregs of conscience*.	
344	He, like a puling cuckold, would *drink up*	That the (Scotch) king, being in amity with him, and no-

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
	The lees and dregs of a flat tamèd piece.	ways provoked, should so burn in hatred towards him, *as to drink the lees and dregs* of Perkin's intoxication, who was everywhere else detected and discarded.
345	All is but toys; renown and grace is dead; The wine of life is drawn, and the mere *lees* *Is left* this vault to brag of.	The memory of King Richard *lay like lees in the bottom of men's hearts*; and if the vessel was but stirred it would come up.
	* * *	* * *
345	The filth and *scum* of Kent.	The *scum* of the people.
	Froth and scum, thou liest.	
	A scum of Bretagnes and base knaves.	A rabble and *scum* of desperate people.
	* * *	* * *
345	I have ventured, Like little wanton boys, that swim on bladders, This many summers on a sea of glory.	He that seeketh victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great or too small tasks, . . . and at the first let him practise with helps, as swimmers do with bladders.
	* * *	* * *
346	So one by one we'll weed them all at last.	He entered into due consideration how to *weed out* the partakers of the former rebellion.
	The caterpillars of the commonwealth Which I have sworn *to weed* and pluck away.	A man's nature runs either to herbs or *weeds*; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
346	Now all the youth of England are on fire, . . . Following the *mirror* of all Christian kings.	If there be a *mirror* in the world worthy to hold men's eyes, it is that country.
	* * *	* * *
	Away! *thou rag*, thou *quantity*, thou *remnant*.	He thought it (the outbreak) but a *rag* or *remnant* of Bosworth Field.
	* * *	* * *
347	And here you *sty me* On this hard rock.	*Styed up* in the schools and scholastic cells.
	* * *	* * *
348	Hamlet describing the heavens: This majestical *roof fretted* with golden fire.	For if that great Workmaster had been of a human disposition, he would have cast the stars into some pleasant and beautiful works and orders, *like the frets in the roofs of houses*.
	* * *	* * *
348	A bond of air strong as the *axle-tree* *On which heaven rides.*	This is the *axle-tree whereupon I have turned* and shall turn, *The poles* and *axle-trees of Heaven* upon which the *conversion is* accomplished.
	* * *	* * *
348	But the *shales* and *husks of men*.	To reduce learning to certain empty and barren generalities; being but the very *husks and shells of sciences*.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
349	The empress sends it thee, *thy stamp, thy seal,* And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.	We set *stamps and seals* of our own images upon God's creatures and works.
	Nay, he is your brother by the surer side, Altho' *my seal be stamped* upon his face.	
	* * *	* * *
351	*By this divine air,* now is *his soul ravished.*	*Melodious tunes,* so filling and delighting the ears that heard them, as that it *ravished* and betrayed all passengers.
	On whom *the music* of his own vain tongue *Doth ravish* like enchanting harmony.	
	* * *	* * *
351	A sea of joys.	He came with such *a sea of multitude* upon Italy.
352	A sea of air.	A sea of air.
	A sea of care.	Vast *seas* of time.
	A sea of glory.	A *sea of quicksilver.*
	Shed seas of tears.	Will turn *a sea of baser metal* into gold.
	That sea of blood.	
	A sea of woes.	
	A sea of troubles.	
	* * *	* * *
353	An ocean of his tears.	*The ocean* of philosophy.
	An ocean of salt tears.	*The ocean* of history.
	* * *	* * *
353	There is *a tide in the affairs of men,* Which *taken at the flood* leads on to fortune;	In the third place, I set down reputation, because of the peremptory *tides and currents* it hath; which, if

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
	Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; And we must *take the current when it serves*, Or lose our ventures.	they *be not taken in their due time*, are seldom recovered.
		The tide of any opportunities . . . the *periods and tides* of estates.
		The tides and *currents* of received errors.
	* * *	* * *
354	Before the days of change, still is it so; By a divine instinct, men's minds mistrust Ensuing danger; as by proof we see *The waters swell before a boisterous storm.*	As there are certain hollow blasts of wind, and secret *swelling of the seas before a tempest*, so are there in states.
355	As happy prologues to the *swelling* act Of the imperial theme.	Such a *swelling* season.
	Behold the *swelling* scene.	
	Noble *swelling* spirits.	
	* * *	* * *
355	And all *the clouds that lowered upon our house* In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.	Nevertheless, since I do perceive that *this cloud hangs over the house.*
	How is it that the *cloud still hangs on you*?	But the *cloud* of so great a rebellion *hanging over* his *head*, made him work sure.
		The King . . . willing to leave *a cloud upon him* . . . produced him openly to plead his pardon.

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
356 You *thief of love.*	Intending, the discretion of behaviour is a great *thief of meditation.*
A very little *thief of occasion.*	
* * *	* * *
The rogue fled from me *like quicksilver.*	It was not long, but Perkin, who was made of *quicksilver*, which is hard to hold or imprison, began to stir.
That *swift as quicksilver* it courses through The natural gates and alleys of the body.	
* * *	* * *
357 The very *sea-mark* of my utmost sail.	They were executed . . . at divers places upon the sea coast of Kent, Sussex and Norfolk, for *sea-marks* or lighthouses, to teach Perkin's people.
357 A base, foul *stone*, made precious by the foil Of England's chair where he if falsely *set.*	Virtue is like a rich *stone*, best plain *set.*
* * *	* * *
358 Lo, where comes *that rock* That I advise your *shunning.*	But touching the re-annexing of the Island of Britain . . . the embassador *bare aloof from it as if it was a rock.*
* * *	* * *
361 There's such *divinity* doth *hedge a king.*	The maintaining of *the laws*, which is the *hedge* and fence about *the liberty of the subject.*
* * *	* * *
362 Yet *my duty*, As does *a rock against a chiding flood*,	*Duty*, though my state lie buried in the sands, and my favours be cast upon

SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
Page in Donelly.	
Should the approach of this wild river break And stand unshaken yours.	the waters, and my honours be committed to the wind, yet *standeth surely built upon the rock*, and hath been and ever *shall be unforced* and unattempted.
* * *	* * *
362 Oh, these flaws and starts (Impostors to true fear) would well become A woman's *story by a winter's fire*, Authorized by her grandam.	Popular prophecies. My judgment is that they ought all to be despised, and ought but to serve for *winter's talk by the fire-side*.
* * *	* * *
363 Now that he was The *ivy* which had hid my princely trunk, And *suck'd my virtue out on't*.	But it was ordained that this *winding-ivy* of a Plantagenet *should kill the true tree itself*.
* * *	* * *
364 They are *limed* with the *twigs*. Myself hath *limed a bush* for her. O *limèd* soul, that, struggling to be free. Mere *fetches*, the images of revolt.	Whatever services I do to her Majesty, it shall be thought to be but servitium viscatum, *lime-twigs*, and *fetches* to place myself.
* * *	* * *
365 That strain again;—it had a dying fall; Oh, it came o'er my soul like the sweet south, That breathes upon a bank of violets, Stealing and giving odour.	The breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes like the warbling of music) than in the hand.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
365	Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue, *Anchors on Isabel.* See, Posthumous *anchors upon* Imogen.	The repose of the mind which only *rides at anchor upon hope.*
	* * *	* * *
365	I charge thee fling away *ambition* *By that sin fell the angels.*	The *desire of power* in excess *caused the angels to fall.*
	* * *	* * *
365	Now the time is come That France must veil her lofty plumèd crest, And *let her head fall into England's lap.*	These things did he [King Henry] wisely foresee, . . . whereby all *things fell into his lap* as he desired.
	* * *	* * *
366	This weak impress of love is *as a figure* *Trench'd in ice*, which with an hour's heat *Dissolves to water* and doth lose his form. Noble madam, Men's evil manners live in brass; *their virtues* *We write in water.*	*High treason is not written in ice.*
	* * *	* * *
367	His legs bestrid the ocean. Why, man, he *doth bestride* the narrow *world* Like a Colossus.	For *this giant bestrideth the sea*; and I would take and snare him by the foot on this side.
	* * *	* * *
367	The ague-fit of *fear* is *overblown.* At 'scapes and perils *overblown.*	Many were glad that these *fears* and uncertainties *were overblown*, and that the die was cast.

Page in Donelly.	SHAKESPEARE.	BACON.
368	The seeds of honour.	Cast their seeds in the minds of others.
368	The seeds of time.	There has been covered in my mind a long time *a seed of affection* and *zeal* towards your Lordship.
	* * *	* * *
368	Heaven doth with us as we with *torches* do, Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike As if we had them not.	I shall, perhaps, before my death have rendered the age a light unto posterity, by kindling *this new torch* amid the darkness of philosophy. Matters should receive success by combat and emulation, and not hang upon any one man's sparkling and shaking *torch*.
369	Northumberland, *thou ladder*, wherewithal The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne.	The scaling *ladder of the intelligence*.
	* * *	* * *
	Gloster's show Beguiles him, as *the mournful crocodile* *With sorrows snares relenting passengers.*	It is the wisdom of crocodiles *that shed tears when they would devour.*

I will conclude by putting in your hands a full and precise copy of all the papers which precede the plays themselves in the celebrated Folio of 1623, together with the portrait which was therein published, and the lines in which the two publishers described it :—

FIRST FOLIO OF 1623.

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TO THE READER.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
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with Nature, to out-doo the Life:
O, could he but haue drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face, the Print would then surpasse
All, that was euer writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his booke.

B. I.

Mr. WILLIAM

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But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his booke.

B. I.

LONDON

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DEDICATION.

To the most noble and incomparable Paire of Brethren. William Earle of Pembroke, &c. Lord Chamberlaine to the Kings most Excellent Majesty. and Philip Earle of Montgomery, &c. Gentleman of his Majesties Bed-Chamber. Both Knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter, and our singular good Lords.

Right Honourable,

Whilst we studie to be thankful in our particular, for the many fauours we haue receiued from your L.L we are falne upon the ill fortune, to mingle two the most diuerse things that can bee, feare, and rashnesse; rashnesse in the enterprize, and feare of the successe. For, when we valew the places your H.H. sustaine, we cannot but know their dignity greater, then to descend to the reading of these trifles: and, while we name them trifles, we haue depriu'd our selues of the defence of our Dedication. But since your L.L. haue beene pleas'd to thinke these trifles something, heeretofore; and haue prosequuted both them, and their Authour liuing, with so much fauour: we hope, that (they out-liuing him, and he not hauing the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them, you haue done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Booke choose his Patrones, or finde them: This hath done both. For, so much were your L.L. likings of the seuerall parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the Volume ask'd to be yours. We haue but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphanes, Guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, and Fellow aliue, as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his playes, to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we haue iustly obserued,

no man to come neere your L.L. but with a kind of religious addresse; it hath bin the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the present worthy of your H.H. by the perfection. But, there we must also craue our abilities to be considerd, my Lords. We cannot go beyond our owne powers. Country hands reach forth milke, creame, fruites, or what they haue: and many Nations (we haue heard) that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leauened Cake. It was no fault to approach their Gods, by what meanes they could: And the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious, when they are dedicated to Temples. In that name therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your H.H. these remaines of your seruant *Shakespeare*; that what delight is in them, may be euer your L.L. the reputation his, and the fault ours, if any be committed, by a payre so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the liuing, and the dead, as is

Your Lordshippes most bounden,

IOHN HEMINGE.

HENRY CONDELL.

TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS.

FROM the most able, to him that can but spell: There you are number'd. We had rather you were weighd. Especially, when the fate of all Bookes depends upon your capacities: and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well! It is now publique, and you will stand for your priuiledges wee know: to read, and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a Booke, the Stationer saies. Then, how odde soeuer your braines be, or your wisdomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Iudge your sixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your fiue shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the iust rates, and welcome. But, what euer you do, Buy. Censure will not driue a Trade, or make the Iacke go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage at *Black-Friers*, or the *Cock-pit*, to arraigne Playes dailie, know, these Playes haue had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, then any purchas'd Letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected and publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarse receiued from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our prouince, who onely gather his works, and giue them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your diuers capacities, you will find enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leaue you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides: if you neede them not, you can leade your selues, and others. And such readers we wish him.

IOHN HEMINGE.
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On reading this Dedication and Address the question naturally presents itself, Did these two publishers write them, and if not, who did?

It may throw some light upon this if I call attention to certain peculiarities in the expressions made use of.

Shakespeare, they say, had not the fate common to some, to be "*executor to his own writings.*" Then his plays are spoken of as "*Orphans,*" and what they desired to do was "to procure *Guardians*" for them. Then depreciating hostile criticism of the plays, they say, "*Know these Plays have had their Trial already*" and "*stood out all Appeals,*" and do now come forth "*quitted rather by a Decree of Court*" than by any purchased letters of commendation." Do you bear in mind, gentlemen, the insatiable appetite for legal phrases and expressions exhibited by the writer of the plays? Did the same author then write the Dedication?—it rather looks as if he did. If so, the writer of the plays and Dedication was not William Shakespeare, for he had been dead seven years when the Dedication was written. Was it Heminge and Condell that composed it? Had they then, like Shakespeare, picked up legal phrases in hanging about the Courts at Westminster? Not likely, I should think. If it should be the case that Francis Bacon wrote the plays he would, probably, afterwards have written the Dedication of the Folio, and the style of it would be accounted for.

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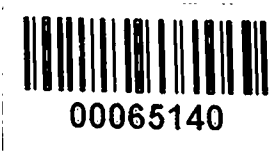
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